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THE
E R R O R S
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E D U C A T I O N.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS,

DEDICATED (BY PERMISSION)
TO THE RIGHT HON. THE COUNTESS OF
HILLSBOROUGH.

Instability of Mind impedes our Road to Perfection; and Youth,
if not animated by *Example* to illustrate the *Precepts*
of Virtue, will ever fall into Error.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
Minerva Press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

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E R R O R S
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C H A P. XIV.

CIRCUMVENTION.

FOR several days Sir William and the Colonel pursued one general plan; they visited Miss Summers of a morning, joined her evening parties, and at night met their friends at Brookes's: and so infatuated was Sir William, respecting Colonel Minors, that he neither saw his designs on Miss Sum-

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mers, nor regretted the money he continually lost to him at play: and when the whole twenty thousand pounds he had in the bank was gone, he scrupled not to raise money by granting an annuity on his estate. Lady Beaumont, who had been a painful observer of his actions, though she little suspected his great losses, one day when he did her the favor to dine at home, a thing now not very usual with him, took occasion to mention his apparent attachment to Miss Summers, and asked, if he had any serious design of addressing her? he was rather disconcerted, but replied, "He really liked her very much, though he had not yet made up his mind to think of marrying; but, when he had, Lady Beaumont should be the first person consulted."—"And you will find, my dear William, (said she) that I shall deserve your confidence; the young lady mentioned is young and volatile, but she is of a worthy family, and a few years hence, perhaps, may prove an ornament to it; I therefore neither persuade you for, nor against addressing



addressing her; only remember, Miss Summers is a woman of family, who will not fail to resent any improper behavior on your part.—This morning (she continued) I have received two cards of invitation, the one I have accepted to oblige you, the other to please myself:—this, is from Lady Summers for a rout next Thursday; that, from Mr. and Miss Thornhill to spend the day with them on the Monday after: I hope you will accompany me to both places.” Sir William replied, “He would attend her with pleasure.” “I have (resumed she,) just received an answer to a letter I wrote to procure Miss Rivers an eligible situation; I shall therefore spend this afternoon with that poor girl, and hope she will soon be settled to her wishes.”—“May I ask where?” said Sir William, “No, replied Lady Beaumont, it can be of no consequence to you to know more than that the situation is approved of by herself and me.”—“I sincerely wish her happy, (said he, rising,) and I hope, madam, if any part of my fortune can make

her so, you will command it." He left her at these words, and she ordered the carriage to take her to Green-street.—When she arrived Miss Rivers was alone; a deep melancholy had taken possession of her features, but her countenance looked composed, tho' sad; she received Lady Beaumont with the warmest expressions of gratitude for her kind visit, adding, that her mother had been in the city all day.—" My visit, said her ladyship, is entirely to you, my dear girl: I have received an answer from Mrs. Wilkins, such a one as I hope you will approve: she read the letter; Mrs. Wilkins most thankfully accepted the honor of the young lady's company, and said, she would make it her study to accommodate her with every convenience and pleasure in her power to procure, adding that Miss Rivers might be assured, from her respect and love for her ever-honored lady, she would be happy to receive and attend any person dear to her." Miss Rivers expressed her gratitude in tears of joy and thankfulness; she saw, by the letter,

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ter, how advantageously she had been recommended, and was eager to set out for a situation so desirable. It was settled that the second day after this she should begin her journey, and Lady Beaumont undertook to procure her every convenience. Miss Rivers said she had been very much hurried a few days before by a visit from Lady Stanley; "Her ladyship, (said she,) had called once or twice when my mother was out, and I declined seeing her; but unfortunately this day, my mother came to the door just as the carriage drew up, and, without my knowledge, brought Lady Stanley up stairs to me:—I thought I should have fainted, she started with surprise, and kindly taking my hand, "My dear Miss Rivers, (said she,) I cannot forgive myself for not seeing you before; I find you are better; but why would you conceal your illness from your friends?" I burst into tears.—Oh, madam, what can equal the self-reproach we feel at meeting with *undeserved* kindness? I could not speak to her.—"I see your spirits are weak; (said

she,) endeavour to be well, my good girl, and I hope your circumstances will soon be made easier. Come and stay a month with me; Mrs. Rivers, will you and your daughter favor us so far?" This kind invitation, which a short time since we should have accepted with pride and pleasure, my mother politely declined, saying, "Change of air was necessary to restore my health, and therefore in a very few days we were going into the country"—her ladyship requested if we found it necessary to return to London this winter we would come to her, which we readily promised:—but I am sure Lady Stanley thinks there is something particular in my case; she eyed me with such curious, yet compassionate looks.—How rejoiced shall I be to quit this town, which was once, in my opinion, the only place fit to live in."—Before Lady Beaumont left Miss Rivers, her mother arrived, and Mrs. Wilkins's letter being communicated she readily agreed to set off from London at the time proposed; and it was settled that Mrs. Rivers should drop her daughter

daughter at Lady Beaumont's, and from thence go on to Dover:—Every thing being thus fixed, she took leave with an encreasing esteem for the daughter and a sovereign contempt for the mother. Sir William meantime, when he left the house after dinner, had sauntered down through Hyde-park towards the Mall, intending to go round to St. James's-street—just before he got to the stable yard, he was overtaken by Lord Stormer who had been strolling in the Mall.—“ Ah, (said Sir William,) I am glad to see your lordship—what, are you just arrived from the country ?” From the country ! (repeated Lord Stormer) I have not been in the country”—“ No ! why Minors told me so ;—but what is the meaning then that we have not seen you this week past ?” “ Because I have been very busily engaged in looking into my affairs ; I find I can no longer afford to play, being utterly undone, and therefore am about to quit England.” “ How ! (replied Sir William,) quit England, my Lord ! there surely is no necessity

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for that;—you have friends who will gladly join to relieve you from any temporary difficulties”—“ That you are one of those who would not scruple to serve a friend, I am convinced, Sir William; and I am grateful for your intended kindness; but nothing at présent can save or serve me—I have given up all for the benefit of my creditors; they allow me 500*l.* a year, and within that sum I am determined to live in future; but, as it cannot be done in England, I intend going to Flanders; or perhaps to Italy; France I shall avoid, as too many of my countrymen flock thither.” “ But pray, (said Sir William) may I ask what has occasioned this sudden resolution?” “ I have already told you my fortune is gone; but the evening we spent at Lady Mandeville’s, and some particular occurrences which interested me *there*, gave birth to the resolution of examining into the state of my affairs; my motives for so doing avail nothing, and in going abroad I sacrifice all my wishes.—You, Sir William, are yet happily exempt from any difficulties,
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the sums you have lost cannot materially injure your fortune; let me conjure you, then, to retreat in time. Play is fascinating, it steals imperceptibly upon us; and every day adds to the infatuation; the evils attending it are manifold, the loss of time and fortune are the least of them—a few days serious reflection on my mortifying situation has taught me to judge properly—let me conjure you once more to retreat whilst you can do it with honor.” —“ I am really so much surprised, (answered Sir William,) that I hardly know how to thank you for advice which is no doubt kindly meant.—How will the Colonel be astonished! he believes you in the country, and will scarcely credit my report.” “He is better informed than you think for, returned his lordship; but that is immaterial; —I must take my leave being engaged on business:—I will do myself the honor to call on you before I leave England; and believe me, Sir William, I feel sincerely interested in your happiness.”

Never was surprise greater than the Baronet's; his lordship's admonitions gave him some pangs; he was convinced of the truth of his observations, and he knew that in the course of a few weeks he had lost what by some would have been thought a princely fortune; at one moment he resolved to play no more; but then to give up all hopes of retrieving, to set down with losses so very considerable without having the chance of recovering them, he thought would be madness and folly:—if he could but regain ten thousand pounds, redeem his annuity and have some ready cash, he would give up play entirely and be contented to resign the other sums.—With this, (what he thought,) laudable resolution he went to seek the Colonel, whom he found at White's, and then related minutely his conversation with Lord Stormer. The Colonel trembled as he proceeded; but, when he found no accusation was made against himself, and that the Baronet was still ignorant of all his deceptions, he affected to turn the whole into ridicule; but perceiving it had
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made rather a serious impresson on Sir William, he said, "To you, my friend, I will confide a *secret*, depending on your honor — known then Lord Stormer has been detected at some little finessè in play, which has hurt his reputation, and is the real cause of his going abroad; I expostulated with him on the subject, which occasioned a coolness, and I really thought he was in the country; but upon the whole I think he is right to go abroad 'till the affair is blown over; 'tis not generally known, and I hope I have succeeded in stopping some people's tongues." Such was the influence this artful man had acquired over Sir William that he readily gave credit to this slanderous invention; and the growing esteem he had felt for Lord Stormer was changed into contempt.—The two gentlemen knowing that Miss Summers was gone with a party to Drury-Lane play-house, followed her thither, and after reconnoitring the house, fixed themselves in a box adjoining to the party they looked for:—Miss Summers soon fell into chat with them; but

Lord Summers, who was in company, politely bowed to Sir William, but made a very distant one to the Colonel; this he saw and felt, but having too much confidence to be easily abashed, he chatted with great freedom and unconcern to the ladies, whilst Sir William, from a real attachment to Miss Summers, expressed more by his looks than words, and but occasionally joined in the conversation: perfectly satisfied that the Colonel had no views on the young lady, he felt no disquietude at his assiduities, but was pleased that his attentions precluded two or three other gentlemen who were of the party from being noticed. When the play ended there were several competitors for the hand of Miss Summers which she, in defiance to the frowns of her uncle, resigned to the Colonel, who conducted her to the carriage, and then joined his friend. "Well, Sir William, (said he,) no bad omen for you,—your goddess could not openly shew her preference to you, but in giving her hand to your companion she certainly designed you

a compliment.”—“ And do you really think so?” (cried the Baronet eagerly.) “ To be sure I do; it is very obvious—O, I enjoyed the haughty uncle’s disappointment; there is a Lord Fairfield who, I am told, is designed for her; but let us try if we cannot circumvent him; I am persuaded the young lady herself has no predilection in his favor.”—“ But would you seriously advise me to marry Miss Summers?” “ Do you really like her? “ Certainly, I do, but yet I have no violent inclination to marriage.”—“ Nay, you must determine for yourself: between you and me, she is a great coquet, and unless you can be contented to see your wife quite *the ton*; flirting with every pretty fellow, I would advise you against it; her fortune you do not want, and I am persuaded her person will soon prove a great incumbrance.” “ I know not what to determine on at present; I cannot relinquish her, but I shall take a little more time for observation before I think of making any serious addresses. Her uncle, Lord Summers, whom

I only saw once at her house, treated me with great politeness, and if I chose to make an offer I don't think it would be refused."—"I dare say not, (answered the Colonel,) and therefore there is no necessity for hurrying matters." By this time they arrived at Brooks's, met their usual set, and pursued their usual mode of entertainment.

CHAP. XV.

PARENTAL AFFECTION IN A MODERN FINE LADY.

THE day arrived in which Mrs. Rivers and her daughter were to take very different routes.—Without feeling the least concern for her unhappy child, Mrs. Rivers only blamed her obstinacy in refusing to accompany her to Paris; and when they arrived at Lady Beaumont's about one o'clock

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(an hour when Sir William was never home,) she alighted from the carriage and entered the house with the greatest unconcern imaginable: not so Miss Rivers; she shuddered, and could scarcely by the help of salts keep herself from fainting, although she was received with the greatest kindness by Lady Beaumont. "I have brought my daughter, and resign her to your ladyship's care;" (said Mrs. Rivers, with much nonchalance.) "I accept the trust, (said Lady Beaumont,) and flatter myself I shall deserve the confidence and affection Miss Rivers favors me with."—"As the day is far advanced, (resumed the other,) I have no time to lose; I must, therefore, make my acknowledgments to your ladyship and hasten on my journey. Adieu, my dear Anna, pray write to me as soon as I have acquainted you with my place of residence: take care and behave well, child, in order to deserve Lady Beaumont's kindness, and bring no more disgrace upon me"—"Fie! Mrs. Rivers, exclaimed her ladyship, seeing the unhappy girl drowned in tears and unable to speak,)

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is this a time for such a cruel reflection? *I* venture; madam, to answer for Miss Rivers—she will not disgrace *you*,—may she have reason to be proud of her mother!” the poor girl advanced, and throwing her arms round her unfeeling parent, sobbed out!—“Forgive me, madam, for all the trouble I have occasioned you! henceforth you shall have no cause to complain of me. May Heaven bless my dear mother! may you enjoy health and happiness, and may no thought of me disturb your quiet!” Devoid of sensibility as Mrs. Rivers was, she could not help being a little affected, a few tears dropped from her eyes, and kissing her daughter, with some appearance of tenderness, she took leave of Lady Beaumont, stepped into the carriage, which waited, and pursued her way to Dover. It was some time before Miss Rivers could be composed, though Lady Beaumont soothed her with the kindest expressions—the stage which was to convey Miss Rivers to Exeter, set off in the evening, she was therefore to remain in her ladyship’s

ship's dressing-room 'till the appointed hour, and was secure enough from seeing Sir William, a sight she dreaded worse than death.

CHAP. XVI.

THE EFFECTS OF CREDULITY.

THAT same day soon after, Sir William returned to dress, he was informed Lord Stormer was come to wait on him—he repaired to the parlour under those unfavorable impressions the Colonel had instilled into his mind, and received his lordship with a politeness so reserved as was too obvious to be overlooked.—“ Being about to quit the kingdom to morrow, Sir William, I called to have the pleasure of seeing you once more, and to know if I can do you any service abroad.” “ Your lordship is very obliging ;

obliging; (answered the Baronet,) but I am equally unknown and unknowing out of England." "You will pardon the observation, Sir William, (resumed his lordship,) but, from the particular reserve which has taken possession of your features, I am inclined to judge you have been impressed with some unfavorable ideas of me since I had the pleasure of seeing you in the park." "Have you, sir, any reasons for indulging such a supposition?" asked Sir William, gravely. "I have, (returned Lord Stormer,) I know my present design has met with the disapprobation of the party I have lately been connected with, and I entertain little doubt but they have inspired you with the same sentiments;—I have no right to censure, much less to advise; my own follies have been too glaring; but permit me to say, that if you would diversify your acquaintance, and not confine your knowledge of the world to one particular set, you would surely find your advantage in it." "I am obliged to your lordship for your advice, though it certainly implies

implies a censure on those you once called your friends." "I can have no views to answer in what I say, (replied his lordship,) but simply a wish for your happiness, and you undoubtedly must act as you please:—then, advancing and taking his hand;" "adieu, (continued he;) believe me sincerely interested in your welfare; and, should I live to return to England, I shall be happy to cultivate your acquaintance and be ranked among the number of your friends."—There was something so open, so pleasing in Lord Stormer's voice and manner, that, in spite of his prejudices, Sir William's gravity insensibly relaxed; and, shaking his hand with great cordiality, he wished him health and happiness: but as soon as they had parted, the Colonel's insinuations to his disadvantage again occurred, again were credited, and he only felt contempt for the plausibility of Lord Stormer's manners; a man who could be guilty of any dishonest practices at play he justly considered as a scoundrel, who would not scruple when temptations came in
his

his way, to defraud and injure in other instances. Thus was he the dupe of the very artifice he despised ! He next began to think of Miss Summers ; the Colonel's opinion of her had great weight with him ; yet he found himself so much attached that he could not bear to give her up : They had paid her several visits since the meeting at the play-house. Whenever Lady Summers was at home, she always directed her attention to Sir William, and the others appeared pleased to have a *tête-à-tête*, in which the Colonel told him Miss Summers always explained herself much in his favor, but still represented her as fickle and trifling.

The evening of the day on which Lord Stormer had taken leave of him, Sir William went with the Colonel to Covent-Garden Theatre ; in the box next them sat a lady, whose charms appeared to engage general admiration. "The lovely Signora is not inconsolable (said the Colonel) for the loss of her dear Lord." "Who do you mean ?"

mean?" (asked he) "Why, don't you know, (replied the other) the lady next to us is Lord Stormer's Bella Signora?" — "No, (said Sir William) I never saw her till now: She is very beautiful." The Colonel then addressed her; they entered into a lively chat, in which the Baronet joined, and ended with the lady's asking the two friends to supper: They accepted her invitation, and accompanied her to Sackville Street, where she had very elegant apartments, and where they had a very genteel entertainment. Wit and good humour presided at the table, and Sir William, who had never till now been in company with a woman so fascinating as this lovely Signora, forgot Miss Summers and every one but the charming object before him; they stayed till a late hour; Sir William asked and obtained permission to renew his visits, and when he quitted the house, was equally intoxicated with love and wine: Being extremely lavish in her praise, his artful companion laid hold of the opportunity to persuade him to take her into keeping.

keeping. "Your affair with Miss Summers may keep cool, (said he) and the charming Signora will amuse your idle hours." The weak, irresolute intoxicated Baronet acceded to the proposal with transport, and determined, on the following morning, to make his proposals in form. Thus, by a gradation extremely natural from the unhappy connection he had formed, he soon became in every sense of the word a profligate; and without a natural propensity to a single vice, adopted every mode of dissipation and folly pointed out to him by others, and this in order to be considered as a man of fashion and gallantry. How many amiable dispositions; how many young men blest with understanding and a thousand good qualities, are sacrificed at the same shrine! Partake of follies which afford them no amusement, adopt the vices of their companions, and at last sink into a vortex of dissipation, which destroys their morals, injures their health, wastes their fortunes, and brings on a premature old

old age without one pleasant reflection, one benevolent good action, or one sensible virtuous companion to administer comfort to a mind diseased.

CHAP. XVII.

A FEMALE SEDUCER.

THE following morning Sir William scarcely allowed himself time for breakfasting, so eager was he to pay the purposed visit in Sackville Street: He found the fair Signora dressed in a style of elegance sufficiently captivating; she, well accustomed to the arts of pleasing, spared no pains to confirm her conquest, and was so successful in her endeavors, that, before they separated, a mutual

mutual understanding took place, and Sir William consented to a very handsome settlement. She had the art to make him believe she had quitted Lord Stormer voluntarily, and, from her pique to him, scrupled not to set him forth in a most ridiculous point of view, which confirmed the Baronet in his prejudices against him: Nor was this all: Sensible that she could very well assist in dissipating his fortune, she wanted no partners to share in the plunder, and therefore threw out several oblique hints against the Colonel, condemned play, and protested against an attachment to a man who devoted those hours to gambling, which ought to be engrossed by her alone.— Sir William was lavish in his promises, swore to forsake play, and every amusement in which his charming Signora had no participation; but endeavoured to combat her apparent dislike to the Colonel, by assuring her, that gentleman was warmly her friend. The hours flew unheeded away, and he scarcely reached home in time for dinner.—

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Unfortunately this was the day he had so much wished for, the day in which his mother had engaged to visit Lady Summers. But his sentiments had undergone a great change;—he acknowledged that Miss Summers was very lovely, but he no longer thought of her with those lively emotions of tenderness he felt a few days previous to this; the fascinating foreigner now engaged all his hopes and wishes, and the Colonel had reason to triumph in the success of his schemes, which left him at liberty to pursue Miss Summers with unremitting attention, and, by imperceptible degrees, make himself master of her heart. When Lady Beaumont claimed her son's promise of attending her to Grosvenor Street, he was highly chagrined he had engaged himself to the Signora; and his embarrassment was very obvious. “How comes it, Sir William, (said her ladyship) that you appear confused at my request? You know this visit of mine is intended solely to give you pleasure.”

“To be candid, madam, (he replied with

some hesitation) entirely forgetful of this engagement, I have entered into another, which it is impossible for me to break thro', from some very particular circumstances attending it."—" So, then, you do not mean to accompany me?" (said she, both surprised and offended.) " Yes, madam, I will attend you there; but you must excuse my leaving you." " Your behaviour is very extraordinary. A few days since you were lavish in the praise of Miss Summers, and desirous of my cultivating an intimacy there; now you are indifferent, and plead other engagements which certainly are subsequent to your promise of attending me to Grosvenor-street—How inconstant is your conduct! You have no steadiness, nor can there be any reliance on your word."—" Your pardon, madam, (replied he, much piqued) if I presume to remind you the law at least supposes me arrived at years of discretion." He quitted the room with a careless air, and Lady Beaumont, bursting into tears, deplored the loss of his affection and confidence.

confidence. " I see, (thought she, heavily sighing,) all my fears are realized; his principles, his morals, are become abandoned; and the wretches he associates with have succeeded in plunging him into vice and withdrawing him from all respect and gratitude to me: I have lost my influence; and, very shortly, I have no doubt, shall be deprived of his company entirely. With the most painful reflections she retired to her dressing-room, and reluctantly prepared herself for the evening's visit. Sir William went out after dinner, but returned in time to accompany his mother, and feeling a little confused at his late improper behavior, met her with much complaisance, and endeavoured to appear cheerful and inspire her with good-humour. Lady Beaumont was received with distinguished preference by Lady Summers, who expressed herself in the most obliging terms, nor was the young lady wanting in her polite attentions—a vast deal of company was assembled, amongst whom Lady Beaumont with pleasure observed Mr. and Miss Thorn-

hill, the Stanleys and Warners.—Sir William soon found a moment to steal off unobserved, and flew to his Bella Signora:—the Colonel came in soon after he quitted the room, and advancing to pay his compliments to Lady Beaumont, carelessly asked what was become of his friend?" I should rather ask you that question, sir, (said she very gravely;) for you are in general such inseparables that I cannot suppose you ignorant of his engagement this evening." "Upon my honor, madam, (he replied) I am not in his confidence, neither have I the pleasure of his company so frequently as your ladyship supposes.—He then walked off to address Miss Summers, with whom he remained the best part of the evening.—Lady Beaumont was surprised at seeing him there, she was a stranger to what new connections her son had formed, and felt alarmed and uneasy: her two friends mentioned, with some little displeasure, Sir William's total neglect of them; and Mr. Warner shaking his head, cried; "Aye, aye, poor Beaumont is acquiring a knowledge

knowledge of the town very rapidly I believe, and he'll pay dear enough for his experience."

This hint startled Lady Beaumont; she was apprehensive Mr. Warner knew more than he chose to communicate; and, turning to him quickly, are you, (said she,) acquainted then with the nature of his engagements or the names of his companions? "only from report: but Sir Edward Stanley can afford you better information." "Indeed, I cannot; (replied Sir Edward,) I only know my relation, Lord Stormer, is ruined and gone to the Continent; and the same connections may possibly injure Sir William: but I mean to throw myself in his way some morning and be a little more explicit: I am surpris'd at seeing the Colonel without him."

To this Lady Beaumont could only reply, that she was totally ignorant how he spent his time.—"Apropos, (said Sir Edward,) what is become of Mrs. and Miss Rivers? we hear they are gone to France." "You were rightly informed; (answered Lady Beaumont,) I believe that was their design

when they left Town—fresh people coming into the room they were separated, and Lady Beaumont placed herself by Lady Summers, and was much pleased with the old lady's friendly politeness: at the same time she kept an attentive eye on *miss*, who was entirely engrossed by the Colonel; and she saw enough to justify her opinion that they were warmly attached to each other, and was surprised Lady Summers did not appear to observe what she thought so very visible. — After spending an evening of observation rather than of pleasure, her ladyship retired, having engaged the Stanley's and Warners to dine with her the following day. Sir William spent his evening with the Signora, who so well improved his prepossession in her favor that he came away intoxicated with her charms. Fresh sums were raised to adorn her and supply her with every elegance she thought fit to require:—the money which was saved in his minority was now all gone,—his payments from his estates were not yet come round—he had, 'tis true, about seven thousand

and pounds in the hands of Mr. Thornhill, but that he did not care to draw out, as it might subject him to some enquiries or remonstrances from his mother which he chose to avoid; and therefore he paid exorbitant interest for money to supply his extravagancies. He met his mother's friends at dinner, behaved with much politeness but no freedom, and with a slight apology left them early in the evening, to the great mortification of Lady Beaumont.—When the day she had promised to spend with the Thornhills came, he absolutely declined going, without assigning any reason, but an engagement not to be dispensed with. On her return home from this visit she found two letters, the first she opened was from Miss Rivers, and to the following effect.—

“ Dearest Madam,

No words can sufficiently express the feelings of my heart, or convey to you my deep sense of your unmerited goodness: unworthy as I am, you have deigned to bid me look

up to your protection and regard ; precious is the remembrance ;—and my study, for the remainder of my days, shall be to deserve it. —My journey was safe and pleasant, and when the stage entered the yard of the inn, I was accosted by Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins, the most friendly amiable couple I ever saw, who waited to receive me, and behaved with such kindness and expressions of esteem as called forth all my gratitude. I am indeed most agreeably situated, and if there was peace within my breast, should pronounce myself happy ;—but ah, my dear madam, nothing can still the monitor within, and I look back with never ceasing regret on the past errors of my conduct. May you, my ever respected benefactress, experience every felicity this world can afford ! for the knowledge of your happiness is essential to my peace. I have as yet heard nothing from my mother—alas, I tremble for her !—however mistaken she has been in the means, she surely sought my happiness and advantage, and I have, in return, covered her with disgrace, and perhaps, thrown her into situations which may
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end in misery.—Heaven forbid—but my prospects on that side are very gloomy. Pardon me, madam, for intruding my sorrows when I ought only to rejoice in your goodness, which is indelibly imprinted on the heart of, your ever-obliged and truly grateful,

Anna Rivers."

"Poor girl! (exclaimed Lady Beaumont,) may her future days be happy! alas my prospects are not more bright than her's."—She then took up the second letter, and was surprised to recognise the hand of her brother, Lord Maybank, who hardly ever wrote to her: She opened it hastily, and learned, that his lady was dead, and he on the point of coming to London to bring his only daughter and resign her to the care of his sister.

Lady Beaumont felt sincere grief for the loss of Lady Maybank; for although there had been but little intercourse in the families, she knew she was amiable, respectable, and unfortunately married; for Lord Maybank was quite a tyrant, and, from a high opinion

on of his own understanding, looked with contempt on most men, and all women—a disposition so unpleasant neither conciliated love nor friendship; to preserve peace, his lady submitted to his laws, and sacrificed her own good sense to his arbitrary temper; but as he had no such claims on society, his company was avoided. Those who were inferior to him in rank and fortune, were awed, by his pride and supercilious manners, from presuming to visit him; and those few upon an equality with him, held him in too much contempt to brook his dogmatical and capricious behaviour. Lady Maybank was indeed generally esteemed, but no one seemed inclined to visit her, as it could not be done independent of seeing him also—Hence they lived almost alone in their solitary castle; and the sole amusement and employment of Lady Maybank was to educate her daughter; but in this she met with so many obstacles from her Lord, who made no scruple of ridiculing his wife, that had not Miss Maybank been blest with a most happy disposition,

position, and an excellent heart, she never would have acquired those virtues and accomplishments which now rendered her an ornament to her sex. She deeply felt the loss of her aimable mother, and was for a long time inconsolable, which so exasperated the pride of her tyrannic father, who could not bear the idea that she should regret a loss he thought of small consequence, that he took a most unjustifiable dislike to her; to which another circumstance contributed, a fondness he had contracted for his gardener's daughter, who being ambitious and artful, soon, by a perfect submission to his will, and a mean compliance with whatever commands he issued, obtained a greater ascendancy over him than ever his aimable wife could boast; he indeed grew so fond of her, that he was determined she should reside at the Castle; but as this could not be done without highly offending the delicacy and reputation of his daughter, after various schemes to get rid of the objection, he resolved to take her to England. Her mother's

fortune, a very considerable one, was to be her's when she came of age; he therefore determined to allow her £ 400 a-year for the present, and flattered himself she might soon get well married, and he be rid of her for ever. Such were the thoughts of this *affectionate* father, in consequence of which he wrote to his sister. Lady Beaumont was delighted with the idea of having a companion in her niece; she had never seen her, but conceived the most flattering expectations from the character she had heard of the young lady, and from what she knew of her late amiable instructress. Being acquainted with the impetuosity of her brother's disposition, she did not doubt but they would soon follow the letter, especially as he had not even requested an answer, but signified his intention of being in town very shortly.

MODERN

MODERN FRIENDSHIP.

IN the morning, when Lady Beaumont was informed her son was up, she sent him his uncle's letter; he soon returned with it in his hand; "I congratulate you, madam, on the acquisition of a companion so desirable as Miss Maybank; I hope her conversation will enliven your parties, and induce you to mix more with the world." Upon my word, (replied her ladyship) I am already sufficiently dissipated; but as the company of my niece may call more young people about me, I hope I shall have more of your company. He, smiling, answered, "No doubt of that, madam;" but he had already made up his mind. His lovely Signora had hinted, that lodgings were extremely inconvenient, that his visits might be taken notice of, and that a small house would be a thousand times preferable to apartments under the same roof with other families. He acknowledged the justice of her remark, and requested

quested she would procure such a house as might be agreeable and convenient to her. Thus commissioned, 'tis natural to suppose she lost no time, but presently selected a genteel habitation in Clarges Street; she had communicated this to him the preceding evening, and obtained his permission to secure it: The moment he had perused his uncle's letter, a thought struck him that he had now an excellent pretence to quit his mother, and reside entirely with his charming mistress; and he determined to remove previous to Miss Maybank's arrival. He had not seen the Colonel for two or three days, so much had his new attachment engaged him; he now took a walk to call at his lodgings; not finding him there, he went to White's, and the Thatched-House, and was equally unsuccessful — Returning from St. James's Street, he recollected he had not lately paid his compliments at Lady Summers's, and though he had lost his violent penchant for the young lady, he thought politeness required he should now and then
call

call at the door: He walked therefore to Grosvenor Street, and on asking whether Lady or Miss Summers was at home, the servant answered, "My lady is at home, Sir, though very much distressed, and unfit to see company." "And Miss Summers, resumed the Baronet,) I hope she is well?" "O, Lord, Sir, (said the man, shaking his head,) what, don't you know Miss is run'd off with Colonel Minors, and, 'tis believed, gone to Scotland. Sir William was thunder struck: "Gone off with Minors?—Impossible! (said he;) Where is your lady? I wish to see her." The servant went up stairs to his lady, whilst Sir William remained below in the parlour perplexed with a thousand confused thoughts and vain conjectures.—The servant returned, and desired him to walk up into Lady Summers's dressing-room. The moment he entered, she burst into a torrent of tears: "Ah, Sir William, (said she) you have injured me irreparably! Why did you introduce that detested Colonel, who has imposed on my unhappy child, and

and destroyed my peace for ever.” “Is it possible, madam, that what I hear is truth? Has Colonel Minors carried off Miss Summers?”—“Would to Heaven it were false! Yesterday morning a servant came with a card from Miss Raikson’s, requesting my grand-daughter’s company to dinner: Although such an invitation was unusual, I had no suspicions, and glad of any opportunity to promote an intimacy there, I gave a free assent, and the carriage took her into the city, and left her at Mr. Raikson’s; she ordered the servant to fetch her at nine. At the hour appointed I sent the carriage—Judge of the servant’s surprise when he was informed Mr. Raikson’s family were gone out, that Miss Summers did not stay a quarter of an hour in the house, and that one of the footmen waited upon her to a shop in Cheapside, where she said the carriage was to meet her, and there he left her. My footman, who is a sober intelligent fellow, walked to the shop, and asked if a young lady of her description had purchased any thing there, and left it for him to carry? He was told such

a lady was there, and bought some gloves, but took them into the carriage, which came with a gentleman in it to fetch her.—With this heart-rending intelligence my servants returned. Judge what must have been my feelings—I flew to her apartment, and, in her dressing-box, found a scrap of paper with these words only :—

“ Be not alarmed, my dear madam; 'tis only a trip to Scotland ;—in a few days Colonel Minors will have the pleasure of presenting *his wife* to you, in the person of your dutiful

Charlotte Summers.”

For a few minutes (added the old lady weeping,) I was happily insensible of my misfortunes ; as soon as I recovered I sent to my son, Lord Summers ; but so many hours had elapsed, that he thought a pursuit would be useless. “ O, that wretch, I never liked him ; many times have I been on the point of shutting my doors on him, but was restrained from a sense of general politeness and respect to his introducer. O ! Sir William,

liam, why, why did you bring him here to be the ruin of my poor girl?" Sir William sat immoveable in his chair, 'till roused by this address; forgive me, madam, (said he, starting from his reverie,) scarcely can I credit what I hear, tho' from an authority so respectable:—and believe me, when I assure your ladyship, I never had the slightest idea of any particular attachment between Minors and Miss Summers; his introduction here was on my part involuntary, he absolutely forced himself upon me; for, notwithstanding I had then a high opinion of the Colonel, I had not the presumption to think myself entitled to introduce any man where I was scarcely acknowledged as a visitor myself; and so far from having any suspicions of his designs, I have been almost ready to quarrel with him for not doing justice to Miss Summers." "Ah, (said her ladyship,) his whole conduct has been replete with falsehood and duplicity.—Unhappy girl!—what a lot have you drawn!"—Before Sir William could reply, Lord Summers was announced; he
walked

walked into the room, bowed gravely to the Baronet, and seeing his mother in tears; besought her to be composed; then, turning to Sir William. "Are you sir, (said he,) furnished with any intelligence respecting your *friend* and my niece?" The word *friend* was spoken with particular emphases. "No my lord; I was 'till this moment entirely a stranger to the Colonel's attachment; and I beg you and Lady Summers will do me the justice to believe my concern is equal to my surprise." "The girl is ruined; (cried Lord Summers;) I have this morning been unquestionably informed, he has been guilty of such glaring improprieties that the corps mean to require his felling out of the guards: his character is infamous; he has long supported his extravagancies by gambling and duplicity of the meanest kind; Lord Stormer he has completely ruined; and report says, Sir William, that you are a pretty considerable sufferer from his *friendly* attentions," Had a bullet wounded him suddenly, Sir William could scarcely have been
more

more surprised and shocked: he was now convinced the Colonel was a villain, and that he had been an egregious dupe. With much hesitation and confusion he acknowledged to Lord Summers that he had indeed been greatly imposed upon, that he always saw the character of Minors in a favourable point of view, and had placed unlimited confidence in his honor. "*His honor!*" (repeated Lord Summers) he is the most worthless of mankind; and this wretched girl, whom he has seduced, will soon experience bitter regret and unavailing repentance; her fortune was the inducement, and he well knows she is entitled to it on her marriage—a cursed thing (cried he stamping) to have such a fellow brought into the family—but I swear he never shall enter my house, neither will I ever see his worthless wife." O! my son, (said the old lady, weeping,) do not be too rash." "I have sworn it, madam," "you must do what you please; it will not be long, I fear, before she will want a comforter, and a protector too, from the very man she has

so

so scandalously eloped with." Sir William rose to take leave, entreating Lady Summers not to entertain any displeasure against him for the late unfortunate affair, which would ever afford him cause of regret and sorrow; and inwardly cursing the Colonel for making him the tool to carry on his infamous scheme.

When he left the house he had abundant cause for reflection; every doubtful transaction in which he had been sometimes diffident of the Colonel's honor, appeared in it's true light; he recollected what Lord Stormer had said to him, called to mind the various plans adopted for engaging him in play, together with the immense sums he had lost; and, on the whole, entertained no doubt but Minors was an unprincipled fellow.—This last affair with Miss Summers he could not forgive; his pretended dislike of her, and base endeavours to prejudice him against her, were now accounted for: he was like one awakened from a dream. To escape from
unpleasing

unpleasing reflections and recover his spirits, he flew to his charming Signora; he found her busily employed preparing for a removal into Charges-street, and therefore not at leisure to attend to his complaints or dissipate his vexation:—having engaged him to meet her in the evening at her new house, she resumed her employment; and he walked to St. James's-street:—he called in at White's; every one was making observations on Miss Summers's trip to Scotland, which was, by this time, the current news of the day:—Some applauded the Colonel's successful manœuvres, others affected to pity the girl; and all applied for information to Sir William, as the Colonel's confidential friend: Sir William could not govern his temper, but bitterly reviling Minors, abruptly quit-
ted the room.—He now saw himself without a single companion, he had circumscribed his acquaintance, and being ever with Minors was only known to his associates, whom he was determined to give up, and, if possible, renounce play for ever.—Alas he
never

never once reflected, that he had lately entered into a new engagement which might prove equally as destructive to his fortune, and injurious to his character with the respectable part of mankind ! he now sauntered into the park, where he was accosted by Sir Edward Stanley and Mr. Warner, whom he would have given the world to avoid : “ So, so, my young friend, (cried the latter,) you are jockey’d I hear.” — “ Jockey’d, sir !” — “ Why, your best friend, the Colonel, has run away with your mistress and forty thousand pounds.” — “ She was no mistress of mine ;” replied the Baronet. — The town says so, and every body pities Sir William Beaumont for being duped by a false friend and inconstant mistress.” “ The town is very impertinent, (answered he in a haughty tone,) to concern itself about me, and very much mistaken in its judgment.” “ I believe so, (said Sir Edward, in a careless way ;) ’tis not likely Sir William should have any serious attachment whilst he visits in Sackville-street.” This was another thunderstroke,

derstroke, but he parried it off, by observing the world was very apt to be mistaken in its conjectures; for his part, he had a particular affection for the lady in question; and for the Colonel he heartily despised him.—Sir William then took leave, rejoicing in his escape from such keen observers. He returned to dine with his mother, and not doubting but she would soon be acquainted with the elopement, exerted resolution enough to be her first informer. Lady Beaumont was equally surpris'd and shocked, for although she had observed a very good understanding between Colonel Minors and Miss Summers; she had no idea it would have produced such disagreeable consequences.—“I am truly sorry for the young lady and her family; (said she) I know they had other views for her; though I believe she did not like the gentleman her friends had chosen:—had *you* seriously address'd her, possibly they might have been inclined to relinquish their first intention;—but, I fear, to avoid Scylla, she has run on Charibdis, for the
Colonel

Colonel is certainly a worthless and contemptible character, I flatter myself, my son, you will now give him up." This, Sir William assured her of;—and Lady Beaumont lamented that an event which had accomplished so desirable a wish on her side, should be productive of sorrow and vexation to the Summers' family.

CHAP. XVIII.

VIOLENT ATTACHMENTS SELDOM PERMANENT.

THE Colonel and his prize proceeded to the land of Hymen with all the expedition a post-chaise and four could make; they were soon united, and never was a pair

so truly happy; Miss Summers thought herself blest in the most amiable of men, and had not the smallest doubt but, as their union was indissoluble, her friends would soon be reconciled to the charming Colonel; a matter to him totally indifferent: Secure of her fortune, his pride only was concerned in desiring a reconciliation; and as that might receive some abatement from their behaviour, he was determined never to seek what he could hardly expect they would offer. Forty thousand pounds would set him above soliciting favors from any man; the only drawback on his present felicity was the chance of meeting Sir William Beaumont; but, as in love and war, all advantages are judged to be fair and lawful, he resolved, if he could not avoid him, to meet him with a merry countenance, and term his deceitful proceeding a well concerted frolic. On their arrival in town, the new married pair drove directly to the hotel in Pall-mall, and when a little recovered from their fatigue, Mrs. Minors thought proper to write her grand-

mother and uncle : Lady Summers, though highly grieved and offended, considered the extreme youth and volatility of this rash young creature, and how very incapable she was of conducting herself with any tolerable propriety ; she knew, that if forsaken by her friends, and those interested in giving her good advice, she would too probably fall into improper connections, such as might irreparably injure her morals, and bring disgrace on herself and family : From these considerations she returned, though not a kind answer, yet a civil one, desiring to see her. Not so Lord Summers ; enraged beyond forgiveness, despising Colonel Minors, and entertaining the utmost contempt for his niece's light, indelicate conduct, he tore the letter addressed to him in pieces, and enclosing it in a blank cover, without even an address on the back of it, the servant was ordered to carry it from whence he came.— The messenger from Lady Summers returned first, and Mrs. Minors very readily overlooked the coldness of the letter, as it con-

tained an invitation ; the Colonel affected to be pleased, and they both anticipated a similar answer from Lord Summers ; but how great was their surprise and mortification on receiving only the fragments of their own letter ! Mrs. Minors wept with vexation ; her husband flew into a violent passion, swore most tremendous oaths, threatened to cane Lord Summers for his insolence to his adorable Charlotte, and, in short, made such a bustle, that she was compelled to dry up her tears, and endeavour to sooth him : But all this passion was counterfeit. He had reflected, that if Lord Summers was reconciled to him, he would try to procure a handsome settlement for his niece : The rash step she had taken had thrown her wholly into the Colonel's power, and he determined to profit by it, and reserve the greatest part of her fortune to himself. Entirely indifferent therefore to his lordship's displeasure, his first care was to write Mr. Raikson, and demand his wife's fortune ; but of this step she was ignorant, and when she pressed him to accompany

pany her to Grosvenor-street, his answer was, " No, my love, visit there first yourself, and when I am invited, I shall with pleasure accompany you; mean time, whilst you are absent, I will look about for a house."

Mrs. Minors ordered the carriage, and prepared, with some little trepidation, to visit her grand-mother. The Colonel sallied forth with all the consciousness of a man, who, by a successful stroke, had acquired fortune and independence. He called in at Brookes's, and was received with vociferous applause and congratulations by some of his old companions, who doubtless hoped to share in the spoil he had so dexteriously obtained.— From thence he crossed the Park, with one or two of his associates, and was on the point of making some enquiries relative to Sir William Beaumont, when, at the opening leading to the Palace, who should suddenly meet them but Sir William and his Bella Signora. Both parties started, but the Colonel, presently recovering his usual confi-

dence, gaily advanced, and seizing the Baronet's hand, " Congratulate me, Beaumont, (said he) I am just returned from a trip to Scotland, and have taken your fair insensible off your hands." " Excuse me, Sir, (said the other, withdrawing his hand,) henceforth we are strangers. Your conduct has sufficiently explained itself; and I have no reason to regret giving up your acquaintance, which I do from this moment." Then hastily passing on, he left Minors a little mortified, though he instantly rallied his spirits, and turning to his companions with an affected laugh, " The poor Baronet, (cried he) is devilishly vexed at my good fortune; and to say truth, the loss of forty or fifty thousand pounds is sufficient cause for vexation; but the lady had a right to please herself; and I must have been a cursed fool to have suffered such a prize to slip through my hands." " I think so, indeed, (replied one of his friends;) I wish the same temptation would fall in my way." The Colonel, however, did not wish for a second rencounter

rencontre with Sir William; and therefore walked through the Palace-yard, and then strolled about in search of a house; chance led him to Clarges Street, where a very handsome one was fitting up. Having examined it, he was standing at the door asking questions relative to the price, when a carriage stopped at the house opposite, and the Signora alighted and went in. Surprised and confused, he asked the man he was talking with if that lady resided there? and was informed she had lived there about ten days. This was enough for him; he slightly said he should call again, and retired, blessing his stars that he had luckily seen the lady before he had taken the house; for, with all his effrontery, he had no inclination to reside within the notice of Sir William Beaumont.

Mrs. Minors returned from her visit, after having, as she said, supported a three hours lecture: "However, my love, (continued she,) the old lady will be glad to see you, and desires you will meet Mr. Raikson at her

house the day after to-morrow." "No, my love, (he replied) I shall beg to be excused; I would not have your family suppose I married you for your fortune; my lawyer shall attend with my instructions to settle that business, and then I will wait on Lady Summers with pleasure." Mrs. Minors, who took this speech literally, saw nothing in it but a compliment to herself, and was highly gratified; she wrote a note to her grandmother, and said, Mr. Anderson, the Colonel's lawyer, would attend at the time appointed, and mentioned her husband's kindness with much self-congratulation.

The following morning they went a house-hunting, and meeting with one handsomely furnished, in Grafton Street, and ready to receive them, they directly agreed for it, and determined to move into it the very next day.

In the mean time, Sir William Beaumont, who felt very much hurt at meeting the Colonel

lonel in the Park, requested his Signora not to keep up the least acquaintance with him ; she most readily promised, but, in all probability, from that hour conceived the design she afterwards put in practice. She had now a most elegant house superbly furnished ; it was taken in her name, and fifteen hundred pounds given for the lease ; she had the ordering of all the furniture, plate, &c. and to pay the bills Sir William gave her near four thousand pounds ; nor did his infatuation stop here ; he laid out immense sums in jewels and cloaths ; her equipage was superb ; and, in short, he put no limits to her expences ; all which soon burthened his estate with several annuities ; but this he never attended to, whilst it was so easy to raise money and please his beautiful Signora.— He was now never at home till two or three in the morning, sometimes stayed out all night, and if Lady Beaumont asked him any questions relative to his engagements, he answered in a careless vague manner, without affording her the least satisfaction : She

was entirely ignorant of his attachment ; for although it was much talked of, and the Stanleys and Warners well knew it, no one cared to wound the ears of a parent with intelligence so disagreeable.

Sir Edward Stanley determined to write Sir William a letter, and endeavour, if possible, to awaken him from his dream of sensuality, which must, otherwise, terminate in disgrace and ruin. Alas, he did not consider how much easier it is to avoid follies than recede from them ! A relaxation from principle, imperceptibly leads to fatal consequences, and when we are once plunged into error, the recovery is very difficult, and seldom undertaken. The unhappy connection Sir William Beaumont had formed with an artful unprincipled woman was not to be easily broken ; every day strengthened her influence over him, and rendered him more her slave. For some time he kept his resolution of avoiding play, but falling in accidentally, one morning, with two of the gentlemen

men he had frequently met at Brookes's; he was tempted to accompany them to a billiard-table; he had a very slender knowledge of the game, but happening to win, he soon grew distractedly fond of it, and determined to pursue the amusement with all that thoughtless eagerness which marked his character.

The Colonel and his lady were now settled in their new house, and cards were dispatched to all their acquaintance: love and harmony appeared to have taken up their residence with them, and, for a few days, they were inexpressibly happy—the time appointed for meeting Mr. Raikson had been delayed by the Colonel's lawyer not being in town, and 'till that business was settled the Colonel had declined visiting Lady Summers, though Mrs. Minors had called on her two or three times: in about a week the day was fixed, and notwithstanding Mr. Raikson thought it extremely odd the Colonel did not chuse to be present; he consented to meet

Mr. Anderson as his representative, and brought his own lawyer along with him. They met very amicably. — Mr. Raikson produced his accounts, and it was found that by his integrity and attention he had encreased the original sum of forty thousand pounds to very near fifty: Lady Summers made him the warmest acknowledgements for his noble and disinterested conduct, and secretly lamented the fortune had not remained under his care a few years longer, or that her son had more prudently restricted his daughter from the possession of it until she had attained the age of twenty-one; however, as regret was unavailing, she was silent on that head, and attended to the gentlemen. Mr. Raikson spoke first: "The lady's fortune, I presume, sir, exceeds your client's expectations; did you come prepared to make any offer of settlement, or to abide by what her friends shall judge equitable?" — "Sir, (returned Mr. Anderson) my instructions are very concise; let the lady's fortune be what it may, the Colonel proposes

poses to settle ten thousand pounds upon her and her children, and reserves the remainder for their mutual advantage." Astonishment seized the whole company; at last, "ten thousand pounds, sir, cried Mr. Raikson, you mistake surely; I should suppose he rather means to reserve ten thousand pounds to himself in case the lady dies; for what has he to offer as a settlement or an equivalent for her fortune?" "I did not come here, sir, (replied Mr. Anderson,) to enter into any alterations; neither am I prepared to dispute with you on the subject—what I have to say is simply this, Colonel Minors will settle ten thousand pounds out of his lady's fortune, (which is now become his,) on her and her children:—you well know, sir, he can claim the whole: if this proposal is accepted I am prepared to execute the deeds; if not, the Colonel will pursue what other measures he shall judge proper. The money is his property, and you cannot withhold it." It would be difficult to describe the grief and vexation of Lady Summers at such an evident

dent proof of the Colonel's baseness and avarice.—“ Wretched undone girl! (cried she in the bitterness of her heart;) now indeed will repentance overtake thee! O, fir, (addressing Mr. Raikson) what is to be done?” “ At present nothing can be done; (he replied;) but however reluctantly I may enter upon the task, I will see Colonel Minors, and talk to him. I am sorry to give these gentlemen the trouble of another meeting, but 'tis not to be avoided.”

The lawyers took leave, and left Mr. Raikson with Lady Summers—Mr. Anderson returned and related what had past to the Colonel.—“ Let Raikson come when he will, I am prepared: (said he;) not a tittle will I recede from in my demands.”—In short, there were two or three meetings; the Colonel was obstinate, nor was there any means to bring him into better terms. Mrs. Minors, by the very imprudent step she had taken in going to Scotland, had thrown herself absolutely into his power, and the unfortunate

fortunate clause in her father's will, which gave her possession of her fortune on the day of marriage, had invested the Colonel with the privilege of disposing of it as his generosity might prompt; and how far that could be depended on, has been seen. The guardians were compelled to accede to his proposals, and ten thousand pounds only remained secured to his wife and children; the rest was given up to his discretion. Lady Summers, though sufficiently exasperated against Minors, avoided saying much on the subject to his wife; the particulars, indeed, could not be concealed from her; but she forbore reflecting on him, and contented herself with endeavouring to persuade Mrs. Minors to such a regularity and decorum in her behavior as might claim his respect and ensure his affection. A very short time put a period to his violent affection for his bride; possessed of her fortune, his attentions gradually relaxed—he was absent from her almost all day, and his evenings were spent in amusements in which she had no share:—at
first

first she was hurt and mortified, shed tears in abundance and complained of his want of attention to her; but as she had now many visitors of both sexes, and as he had not attempted to restrain her expences, but gave freely what money she required; she soon fell into the fashionable modes of diverting her chagrin and killing time; and, within a month after their marriage, they were as fashionably careless to each other, and as much attached to separate amusements as if they had been united for seven years; such are the natural consequences of clandestine marriages!

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

WHAT A YOUNG WOMAN SHOULD BE.

LADY Beaumont now hourly expected her brother; and her anxiety to see her niece, that she might be enabled to judge if she was likely to prove an amiable companion, was accompanied with many painful sensations: the charge she was to undertake was a sacred one; the care of a young lady of family and fortune was an arduous task; and when the servant announced Lord Maybank's

bank's arrival; she trembled so excessively that she could hardly stand. It was now twenty years since she had seen her brother, and notwithstanding there was little similarity of disposition, and not much affection between them, yet when he advanced to embrace her, a thousand soft emotions took place in her bosom, and in returning his embrace she burst into a flood of tears. His inflexibility seemed to give way, and with a tenderness of voice not common, he said, presenting his daughter; "This, my dear sister, is my Louisa, my only child; henceforth let her become yours; I cannot place her in better hands."—"From this moment, I consider her as such, (returned Lady Beaumont, clasping her in her arms;) and my heart tells me, I shall not repent the adoption." "Neither shall I, dear madam, I am well assured;" said the young Lady, gracefully kissing her aunt's hand: after many reciprocal endearments, Lord Maybank enquired for his nephew: "I expect him every moment, replied her ladyship, he has, within

within these few days, left my house as an inmate; for, as a young man in the habits of seeing much gay company, there would have been an impropriety in his residing under the same roof with my niece." "I am much concerned, said Lord Maybank, that we have been the cause of depriving you of your son's company."—"Indeed, replied her ladyship, you have no cause for regret: I am persuaded the same event would very soon have taken place, and that he gladly laid hold of this plea to live more to himself, and be free from observing that attention to hours and company I could not dispense with.—At the time of this introduction Miss Maybank was just turned of eighteen, her person of a middling height, rather slender than otherwise, her complexion a clear brown, which some people might call fair, her hair light, her eyes blue, and very expressive; her features, though not exactly regular, yet such as suited the whole turn of her face, which beamed with sweetness and modest cheerfulness

cheerfulness—nor was the intelligence it conveyed a false index of her mind.

Lady Maybank had been a very accomplished woman, the little domestic happiness she enjoyed with her husband, and the solitary life she led in her castle, left her no amusement but the education of her daughter; and her ideas on this point were perhaps a little singular; she endeavoured to improve her morals, and give her the justest sentiments of virtue and goodness before she taught her any accomplishments—she knew *this* must be the ground-work for her future happiness; and when her sweetness of temper, her love of truth, her humanity and admiration of every virtue, appeared, in a thousand little instances, to be confirmed; Lady Maybank then thought it necessary to cultivate her genius—with some difficulty she procured, for three months, a tolerable dancing-master; in music she instructed her daughter herself, and likewise in the French language, drawing, geography and history.

“ My

“My dear Louisa, said Lady Maybank, I wish you to dance *well*, but not *excellently*; the one is a necessary accomplishment for every gentlewoman; the other, by producing universal admiration, is too apt to make girls bold and confident. Extreme excellence in music is liable to yet stronger objections; to attain it, almost every other accomplishment must be neglected; and, when attained, it leads to an improper degree of intimacy with professional people. Music softens the mind—and if a master and his pupil are continually together, bad consequence may ensue: nevertheless, I would have you know and *love* music; but I would not have you *doat* upon it. There is one accomplishment that may be pursued to the utmost without any danger, I mean the art of drawing, which often cheers the solitary hour, and, by fully engrossing the mind, may sometimes prove an antidote to sorrow. A knowledge of modern languages, history, geography and the belle-lettres, is likewise highly proper and even requisite.” Such were

Lady

Lady Maybank's sentiments on education: her daughter religiously followed the instructions of this wise parent, and soon became one of the best informed, as well as one of the most amiable young women of the age: she respected her father, but she adored her mother; and when bereaved by death of this revered instructress, companion and friend, she had nearly sunk under the calamity; religion, however, checked the excess of her grief; and time, that sovereign balsam for our sorrows, at length converted it into a tender melancholy.

The first dawn of pleasure she received was from the idea of being taken to England; her father's conduct could not obtain her approbation, though she never presumed to censure it: of Lady Beaumont, her mother had always spoken in the highest terms; it was therefore with a delight she could not conceal that she prepared to accompany her father, although uncertain what might be her reception.

A few hours after their arrival in town, Sir William came in to visit his mother, and having expected his uncle, was not surprised at being introduced to him. His lordship was evidently much struck with his nephew's figure, and breathed a secret hope that a union might take place between him and his daughter; the young lady also thought him the most pleasing man she had ever seen, and wished that his mental accomplishments might be equal to his exterior recommendation. Sir William thought Miss Maybank handsome, but her beauty was not of the striking kind; it stole upon him imperceptibly, and she must be known to be admired as she deserved. She had not the brilliancy of his Signora; her charms were more insinuating than captivating, and therefore made little impression on Sir William Beaumont. He could not, however, with any decency, go away, but was constrained to pass, what he thought, a very hum-drum evening with this family party, and rejoiced was he when at eleven o'clock Lady Beaumont proposed retiring:

retiring : He rose with alacrity to take leave, and was not a little mortified to find he was expected to attend his uncle about town the next day ; obliged to comply, he endeavoured to assume a cheerfulness foreign to his heart, and promised to be with them at their breakfast table.

When he had left them, Lord Maybank was lavish in his praise ; he said, he was proud of his nephew, that he had the air of a man of fashion. “ But how the devil could you contrive to make him so clever in the country ? continued he, for I apprehend this is the first time of his seeing London.” “ Indeed, answered Lady Beaumont, I take no merit to myself respecting his acquirements ; the few weeks he has been in town have entirely altered him, and I cannot think for the better ; though, perhaps, the modish part of the world may judge otherwise.” — “ Doubtless they do ; (replied he,) you and Lady Maybank would have men as good as yourselves ; but she never could succeed in her

her designs upon me; and I am glad to see my nephew has got rid of the rusticity of a country education." No reply being made by Lady Beaumont, they retired to their apartments; her ladyship accompanied Miss Maybank, and took a most affectionate leave of her for the night.

CHAP. XX.

AN ARTFUL WOMAN.

SIR William, highly rejoiced at his escape from such insipid company, flew to his Signora on the wings of love; he found her, as she said, under the most painful uneasi-

ness, it being the first night that her dear Beaumont had absented himself from supper during his residence with her : She was terrified lest any accident had happened to him. He soon acquitted himself of any neglect, and accounted for his absence. No sooner had he mentioned his cousin than she took the alarm. " Ah, said she, rubbing her eyes with her handkerchief, I see what will become of me ; this young lady is brought over for your wife ; *my* fondness for you will be quickly tiresome, and all *your* vows of love to me forgotten." There is no doubt, he said, every thing a fond infatuated lover could express ; he renewed all his promises to her, and ridiculed Miss Maybank, whom he called a raw Scotch girl ; and, in short, by protestations and presents, he succeeded in calming her grief, and reconciling her to his attendance on his uncle for a few days to come.

Let us now return to Colonel and Mrs. Minors ; he already began to find fault with her expences, and tho', by the little attention

he paid to her, and by his own extravagant mode of living, he encouraged her in dissipation, yet he was by no means pleased at the avidity with which she pursued it. Abroad they appeared the fondest couple in the world ; but, at home, mutual upbraidings and contempt took place of violent fondness, and they agreed in nothing but their love of pleasure, and their desire of separating. Mrs. Minors began to look back with regret on her past folly, in throwing herself and fortune into the power of a worthless man ; she had precluded all possibility of appeal or complaint to her friends, from whom she could expect only reproach and reflections ; intimates she had none ; those fashionable people with whom she was in the habits of living, would only have ridiculed her uneasiness ; and the only persons in the world from whom she could have expected comfort or advice Miss Thornhill and Miss Raiksons, she had most shamefully neglected. Her uncle had never yet condescended to receive her, and from her grandmother, what

consolation had she a right to expect?— Thus, unhappy, deserted, and unable to bear her own reflections, she fled to company as her only resource. A young beautiful woman of vivacity and spirit was naturally an object of general observation; she had soon a croud of gentlemen about her; and one in particular, Lord Delmot, was entirely her shadow. The Colonel, too much engrossed by his own pleasures to attend to the conduct of his wife any otherwise than by restraining her expences, felt neither uneasiness nor displeasure at this circumstance; and thus left to follow her own inclinations, without an object to interest her affections, or a friendly monitor to direct her steps, she launched into every folly which fashion and dissipation could devise.

Poor Lady Summers saw, with much affliction, the progress of levity and folly in a young creature, whom she had looked up to as the foother of her declining years.— The good natured world did not fail to exaggerate

aggrate and blazon forth those errors they helped to confirm; and averse as Lord Summers was to interfere in their concerns, pride brought him one morning to his mother's dressing-room, apparently much agitated and displeased. Throwing himself into a chair, "I foresaw, said he, what would be the event of this cursed marriage. The fellow is squandering away every shilling of my niece's money in gaming and opera dancers, whilst she is flirting with every fellow in town, has already lost her reputation, and will soon, I doubt not, forfeit her honor, if some steps are not taken to stop her career."

"Heaven forbid! (said Lady Summers;) but surely the only way to prevent such a dreadful event, will be for her relations to countenance her, and draw her into different connections." "You must exert yourself then, madam, replied he; I neither can nor will interfere: Her whole conduct is the natural consequence of a wrong education; of sending her in a high style to a boarding-school, where she was taught to consider

herself of great consequence, indulged in expences superior to her companions, and where she learnt nothing, because her teachers found it their interest to oblige her; and thus, a few superficial accomplishments, very ill understood, and a great share of volatility never restrained, have thrown her into the power of a worthless fellow, a disgrace to his corps, who married her evidently for her fortune, has meanly taken the advantage of her imprudence to cheat her, and is now, by his dissipations, in the high road to ruin.”—

“ It avails little to recriminate, or condemn what is past, said Lady Summers; all we have now to do is to prevent the evil consequences you are apprehensive of; I will see her, and talk to her; I hope I have some influence left; she is good-humoured and affectionate, and, on those qualities, I build my expectations of a reformation in her conduct.” Lord Summers shook his head, with an air of incredulity. “ I wish you may not be deceived, madam; but tell her from me, if she thus goes on in a thoughtless career

career of pleasure, and renders her name infamous, by Heavens, I shall take some desperate steps to prevent her infamy from extending to her relations."

When her son quitted her, Lady Summers wrote a note to Mrs. Minors, earnestly requesting to see her in Grosvenor Street the following morning. The evening of this very day, Colonel Minors, with some of his associates, went to the opera for half an hour's lounge; there in a box (which Sir William Beaumont had procured for her) sat the Signora in all the splendour which fine cloaths and jewels could create, accompanied by a lady who was her usual attendant in public; the Colonel soon recognised her, and captivated by her appearance, hastily repaired to her box, and finding himself very well received, entered into a long conversation: Artful wicked people soon understand one another; she explained her situation with the Baronet, and boasted of her success in having, by artful management,

secured an annuity of six hundred pounds a-year for life, besides her jewels, furniture, &c. She warmly congratulated Minors on his marriage, enquiring after his pretty run-a-way lady. He made no scruple of confiding his past and future projects to her, complained of the immense sums he had lost and spent, and hinted a great inclination to quit his wife and England both together. The Signora having no design in her head to execute, nor any present intrigue on her hands, (Sir William being so much engaged, that she never saw him till midnight) began to pay great attention to the Colonel; and having invited him to dine with her the following day, they separated with a mutual good understanding between them; the intercourse was kept up, and a plan formed, which was executed in a short time afterwards.

AN EVENT NEITHER SURPRISING NOR
UNNATURAL.

LORD Maybank having gratified his curiosity by visiting the public places, which, after twenty years residence in the country, were all new to him, prepared to return to his castle and favorite dulcinea; Sir William proposed to accompany him the first day's journey, and having acquainted his faithful Signora he should be absent from her one night, had some difficulty to dry her tears, and enable her to bear the dreadful idea of such a long absence as two days! Miss Maybank, whose truly affectionate heart felt hurt at this first separation from her father, notwithstanding she knew but too well the disgraceful connection he meant to persevere in, parted from him with a flood

of tears. He made her a handsome present for immediate expences, and settled her allowance at four hundred pounds a year:— He then took an affectionate leave of his sister, who sighed to think, that in all probability she should see him no more; and set off in good health and spirits for his return to Scotland.

Lady Beaumont, to divert the grief of her niece, ordered the carriage, and drove into the city, for the purpose of introducing her to Miss Thornhill; this young lady was at home, and received them with that grace and respectful attention which at once delighted and engaged the esteem of Miss Maybank.

Mr. Thornhill being informed of the ladies' visit, soon made his appearance, and after some chat on indifferent subjects, told Lady Beaumont, smiling, she would soon be enabled to congratulate him on a double marriage in his family. “ I rejoice to hear

it

it, answered she, for I am sure the parties must be worthy; have I the liberty to enquire who they are? By the conscious looks of my sweet friend here, I presume she is one." She is, indeed, replied Mr. Thornhill. My sister, in the course of next week, if the lawyers do their duty, gives her hand to Mr. Hargrave, a gentleman whose large fortune and agreeable person are his least commendations; and my near relation, Sir James Godfrey, is at the same time to be united to the amiable Miss Raikson, whom your ladyship saw on your last visit here.— If goodness of heart, and purity of sentiments, with excellent understandings and agreeable persons, can ensure happiness, I think my friends have more than a chance for enjoying it." " And I do assure you, said Lady Beaumont, no one of your friends is more warmly interested in such an event than myself." She took Miss Thornhill's hand, who appeared a little confused at her brother's unexpected communication, " Look up, my dear young lady; nor feel abashed

at bestowing your heart and hand on a worthy man; receive the congratulation of your friends with that confidence a laudable choice must inspire; and may you taste that real felicity which attends a connexion formed on the basis of virtue and goodness." Miss Thornhill modestly expressed her thanks, and hopes of being admitted among the number of Miss Maybank's friends; a compliment that young lady received with much pleasure.

The following evening Sir William returned; and after acquainting the ladies he had left his uncle in perfect health, complained of fatigue and retired to his house, impatient to see his charming Signora; having knocked pretty smartly twice, the door was opened by a woman who had been house-maid from the time the house was first taken.—“Where is your mistress?” demanded he impatiently, as he went through the hall——“Lord, sir, I don't know—I thought she was with you—she went out of town

town yesterday evening"—"Out of town!" replied he, starting back; where?—With whom?—"Why, fir, with the Colonel and Mrs. Henley."—"Colonel!—what Colonel?"—"Colonel Minors, fir;—Mrs. Henley told me they were going to meet you and should return to night." Astonishment seized all his faculties; and for a time suspended the power of enquiry; when a little recovered he asked a hundred questions, and at last gathered, that the Colonel used to come to the house every day, that Mrs. Henley had carried several trunks away, and that the preceding afternoon the Colonel came in and asked the Signora, before her servants, if she should like a ride, to meet Sir William? being answered in the affirmative, he and the lady went in one post-chaise, and Mrs. Henley and her maid in another, taking with them a great many bundles. The Signora told her own coachman and footman they would not be wanted for two days, so, of course, they were both gone out. The servant might have talked on for
hours;

hours; Sir William sat like one transfixed in the chair he had thrown himself into; but, when she ceased speaking, he started up, and flying to the dressing-room found every trunk gone, the drawers open and empty, and the cabinet in which his Signora deposited her jewels and money, completely rifled:—He next proceeded to the dining-parlour and opening the plate closet beheld empty shelves; he had given her money to pay for every thing ordered into the house, and she had taken care to have all the plate and linen marked with her name, therefore he had no redress, even supposing he could find her: to convey any idea of his surprise and madness would be a vain attempt—that the woman who apparently doated on him, who had shed a torrent of tears at parting with him for one night, should have thus basely deceived and robbed him, appeared incredible; but that the Colonel, so lately married, possessed of so large a fortune, and whom she had expressed a very great dislike to, that he should be an accomplice was the most

most astonishing of all things.—In short, the more he reflected the greater was his rage and embarrassment; and when the men-servants returned home, they found him walking up and down the house like a madman; neither was it without difficulty that they could get him to bed: when his own man came into his dressing-room at the usual hour in the morning, he heard an odd noise, and knocking at his door, asked if he chose to be dressed, or have his coffee in bed?—no answer being made, he opened the door, and saw his master sitting up in his bed, panting for breath and apparently very ill: the man, excessively frightened, spoke to him, but he neither answered nor looked at him: the servant rang the bell with violence, and the maids running up, he ordered one to fly for a doctor, and another to acquaint Lady Beaumont of her son's sudden illness. A little capalaire and water was now forced down Sir William's throat, but still he spoke not, nor appeared to know any body.

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A physician and a surgeon soon arrived, and, having been let blood, he recovered breath and looked from one object to another, but without any seeming recollection. Lady Beaumont now came, and on seeing her son in a situation so deplorable, she burst into tears, and taking his burning hand, exclaimed; "My dear William do you not know me? speak, for heaven's sake!" After gazing attentively at her, he pressed her hand, and attempted to move his lips, but could not utter a word. Doctor W. requested her ladyship to be composed; he told her, from Sir William's situation, and the intelligence he had gained from the servants, his disorder appeared to him owing to some violent agitation of mind, which would, he hoped, subside in a few hours, with quiet and proper medicines; and he would pay another visit in the evening. A perfect stranger to any cause which could have occasioned a disorder so sudden and violent, Lady Beaumont was dying with curiosity; and as her son appeared to dose a little,
she

she left his bedside for a moment, telling his servant to call her if necessary, and going into the drawing-room ordered the house-keeper to be called—"madam, answered the maid, the house-keeper was Mrs. Henley, and she is gone with my mistress." "Mistress! repeated her ladyship; what mistress? whom do you mean?"—the servant then, with all the consequence of one trusted with an important secret, acquainted her ladyship of every particular already related—never was astonishment equal to Lady Beaumont's—entirely a stranger to the connection, she had never entertained any idea of Sir William's having a mistress in the house with him, much less could she have believed it possible that Colonel Minors, so lately married to a beautiful young lady, could desert her for an abandoned woman.—Alas, she knew but little of the depravity of mankind, and of the frequent instances where the amiable virtuous wife is, for a time at least, sacrificed to the most worthless and unprincipled of her sex!—But in the case of Colonel Minors

Minors the injury was aggravated by the blackest ingratitude, because the unsuspecting thoughtless Mrs. Minors, by his persuasions, had thrown herself and her fortune wholly in his power, and submitted her happiness and future provision to his generosity. —The servant likewise informed Lady Beaumont of the plate and linen being all carried off.

Shocked as she was at this intelligence, she could easily conceive the natural impetuosity of her son's disposition, was inflamed by such horrid perfidy and deceit; but as most violent passions soon subside, she flattered herself a few hours rest might compose and restore him, and if so, she could scarcely feel any concern for an event which had freed him from such a disgraceful connection. Poor lady! she knew not how far the evil had extended, nor by what swift gradations a man drawn into error plunges into a whirlpool of vice and misery! She returned to his room—he was still asleep, and though he
had

had frequent startings, yet he breathed more freely, and his fever seemed to abate; in about two hours he awaked perfectly in his senses; opening his eyes he beheld his mother hanging over him with tender anxiety; "Ah, madam, are you here?" he faintly cried—"yes, my dear William, and rejoiced to find you better."—"The cause of my illness I blush to acknowledge."—"Say no more, my dear son; I know all, and I trust the ingratitude and deceit you have met with will guard you against future errors and impositions."—"It must, it shall! he eagerly exclaimed. May I but live to meet that villain!"—"And to what purpose should you wish to meet him? said Lady Beaumont. Would you stake a life so valuable to your mother, and which, I hope, may hereafter be useful to your fellow creatures, would you risque such a life for an unprofitable revenge on an abandoned unprincipled villain? Think better my son, and let his crimes be his punishment.—Poor wretch! when the fruits of his villainy are wasted away,

away, when old age precludes his present enjoyments, where will be his recourse from shame and bitter self-reproach!—Oh my dear William you cannot wish a severer revenge than a long life to an abandoned villain like him.”—“What! cried he eagerly, shall I sit tamely by, and let him enjoy the fruits of his treachery?”—“And are you, my son, free from blame? replied Lady Beaumont. Could he have been guilty of this treachery had not your follies (to call them nothing worse) given him the opportunity? a man should be free from errors himself before he presumes to censure the crimes of others, much less take upon him to chastise them.—But no more on this subject:—thank God, you are much better, and will soon, I trust, be restored to health, and what is still more desirable, to a sense of your past errors.”

Sir William was silent, and absorbed in reflection; his mind was still much agitated, though not with that violence which had occasioned

caſioned a temporary ſuſpenſion of all his faculties:—his fever abated, and when doctor W. repeated his viſit, he found him ſo much amended as to be entirely out of danger; indeed, reſt and compoſure alone, ſeemed wanting to re-eſtabliſh his health.

When Lady Beaumont's fears for her ſon began to abate, ſhe reflected with much compaſſion on the ſituation of Mrs. Minors; and, the following morning, when from a good night's reſt he appeared very much amended, ſhe ordered her carriage and drove to Lady Summers's.—She found her at home, without any particular appearance of concern, and felt a reluctance to communicate unpleaſant intelligence; after ſome indifferent chat, ſhe enquired after Mrs. Minors; “ I believe ſhe is well, returned her ladyſhip, ſighing; I have not ſeen her theſe two days, and intended calling in Grafton-ſtreet to day; though I am not a welcome viſitor: that ungenerous man, her huſband, being in poſſeſſion of her fortune, neglects her perſon and

and is careless of her conduct; she is young, thoughtless and generally admired, and I tremble for the consequences.

Lady Beaumont, after a few observations applicable to her subject, at last opened the business of her visit; and supposing Mrs. Minors, from a sense of her misconduct, incapable of applying to her friends under her present distress, proposed to Lady Summers to go with her and call upon her. Lady Summers accepted the offer, and, as Lady Beaumont's carriage waited, they got into it and drove to Mrs. Minors's. The servant, when he opened the door, appeared rather embarrassed, and confessed, his lady had desired to be denied to all visitors; however, Lady Summers said, she knew the order could not extend to her, in consequence of which they got out, and, sending for Mrs. Minors's woman, learned from her, that her lady had been very much afflicted by the Colonel's absence and a letter he had sent her; and that Lord Delmot had called three

times

times but had not been admitted. Pleased with this information, the old ladies sent up their names:—after some little time the maid returned, and ushered them up stairs—they found Mrs. Minors in her dressing-room, her eyes red with weeping, and her dress totally neglected:—she rose at their entrance, and, bursting into tears, took her grandmother's hand and kissing it, exclaimed; "Ah, madam, your poor girl is sufficiently punished for her disobedience and folly!"—then, turning to Lady Beaumont, "you are very good, madam, (continued she,) to support my dear parent under the affliction which my imprudence has brought upon her." "From this hour, my dear Charlotte, (said Lady Summers, embracing her,) your errors are forgotten:—you have still a friend who will never desert you." This kindness, so unlooked for, deeply affected Mrs. Minors, who, though gay and dissipated, did not want sensibility: after being a little recovered, she said, "I see you are both acquainted with the cruel treatment I have met

met with: here is the letter I received the +
~~Stanley's protection she returned to Sir Wil-~~
+ night before last, on my return from a rout
in high spirits and foolish exultation at my
own consequence. Lady Summers took the
letter and read it aloud.

FROM COLONEL MINORS TO MRS. MINORS,

“ Before this letter reaches you, I shall
be far on my way to Italy, accompanied by
a lady who has done me the honor to be my
companion and friend. My own property I
have secured for my use abroad, where pro-
bably I shall stay some years—your ten thou-
sand pounds is incompetent to maintain you
in the style you now live in: but perhaps your
relations may receive you again. I wish
you health and happiness; and shall always
remember, that to your kindness I am in-
debted for my present felicity,

JOHN MINORS.”

“ Judge, said Mrs. Minors, what I must have felt on perusing that letter: a single moment was sufficient to make me sensible of my folly and imprudence. When Colonel Minors was first introduced to me I thought but little of him; I will confess, I preferred Sir William Beaumont; yet, the Colonel’s attentions flattered my vanity; insensibly I began to like him, and as Sir William Beaumont made no particular addressees, and Minors assured me, had other engagements, I grew careless to him and more attached to his companion; my grand-mother, I saw, was not much pleased with his visits, and my uncle openly expressed his dislike to him; I found, therefore, there was no probability of their consent; and from a foolish opposition to the sentiments of my friends, and a violent dislike to another gentleman who was proposed to me, I admitted the Colonel’s addressees, and he gained my whole heart; to my shame I own, little persuasion was necessary to induce me to go off with him; nor, when married and returned to

town, did I feel much regret at the loss of my uncle's affection:—the circumstance of the settlement gave me at first some little pain, but the Colonel told me his apparent interested views were only to vex my uncle, and that he had given his lawyer orders to draw a deed of gift in my favor for twenty thousand pounds more;—this, I believed, and troubled myself no further on the subject: but he soon began to cool in his attentions to me, and was never at home; at first I fretted a good deal, but I had nobody to complain to, nor any redress to expect if I had complained; I was obliged, therefore, to fly to company as a remedy against vexation. The admiration real, or pretended, which I met with, enabled me to bear his slights with indifference; and whilst I was entertained flattered and praised by others I grew careless as to the nature of his engagements: but this letter has opened my eyes; to be entirely deserted for another woman, to be deprived of all my fortune and reduced from opulence to a very trifling comparative sum,

sum, to be obliged to give up my acquaintance and become the talk of the town ; such circumstances were enough to awaken reflection !—two nights and a whole day without rest or comfort, have shown me all my follies in their true light ; and although I have been imprudent and am become poor, yet, if my dear grand-mother will condescend to receive me and shield me from the anger and reproaches of my uncle, I will endeavour to atone for my past errors as much as possible by the regularity of my conduct in future.” “ Yes, my dear child, said the old lady, embracing and weeping over her, yes, into my house, into my arms you shall be received ; and may your present punishment be all you will ever experience for your indiscretion !—but you are not the only sufferer—poor Sir William Beaumont has been cruelly used.”

The whole affair was then related to her and she felt indignation and contempt for the unworthy man for whose sake she had desert-

ed her friends and violated delicacy and decorum, an error she declared she should never cease to deplore. It was then determined to dispose of the furniture and discharge the servants as soon as possible; and that Mrs. Minors should accompany Lady Summers to her country-seat for a few months, 'till the whole matter was forgotten, and till she could be reconciled to appear in public, a thing she now dreaded beyond all others—her ladyship said she would have every thing in the house valued, and when sold the money deposited in a banker's hands to prevent any altercation with Minors hereafter, or any claim upon his wife. Lady Beaumont having stayed some time took leave of Mrs. Minors in an affectionate manner, and leaving Lady Summers with her, returned to her son, lamenting that a young and amiable woman who might have made a worthy man happy, should, by one imprudent step, have involved herself in sorrow and unavailing regret, and be lost to society in the character of a respectable wife and mother.

On her return to her son's, she found him up and much better; and feeling for her niece, who had been so many hours, indeed a day and a night alone; she hastened to her own house, where she was quite rejoiced to find Lady Stanley sitting at work with Miss Maybank: as she had repeatedly sent word to her niece respecting the progress of her son's disorder, both ladies arose and warmly congratulated her on Sir William's convalescence. "How infinitely am I obliged to you, my dear Lady Stanley, (said Lady Beaumont,) for giving up your time to my niece! I little hoped to have found her so happily situated." "The obligation, (answered Lady Stanley,) is on my side: I called here yesterday morning, and was much alarmed at hearing you had been sent for on so disagreeable an occasion; I would have persuaded Miss Maybank to accompany me home, but as she declined doing me that favor from the uncertainty of your situation, I did not chuse to leave her alone, and having spent best part of the day with her and

heard Sir William's disorder had taken a favorable turn, I returned home to sleep, but hurried away this morning to your charming niece; and I congratulate you, my dear Lady Beaumont, on possessing such a treasure."—Her ladyship replied in the politest manner to the compliment, and then naturally fell into a detail of all that had happened. "Except the catastrophe, (said Lady Stanley,) I am no stranger to the whole affair; but 'tis such an unpleasant office to communicate disagreeable intelligence that neither Sir Edward nor myself chose to mention what was very generally talked of: but, added she, I fear Sir William will be a very great sufferer in his fortune." "Not any thing very considerable, (replied Lady Beaumont;) a few hundreds I suppose by the plate and linen that Signora has taken with her." Lady Stanley said no more, although she had been much better informed; but requested her ladyship's permission for Miss Maybank to spend a few days with her during her attendance on her son; which desire

was

was readily complied with and her ladyship promised to dine with them the following day if Sir William's situation permitted her absence.

Having seen her niece safe under Lady Stanley's protection she returned to Sir William and found him very considerably amended in health, but extremely low in spirits. The truth was, that being confined to his room alone, and weak in body, he had reflected on the state of his affairs, and the strange infatuation of his mind for some weeks past; he found when all his debts were paid his estate would be little more than *one* thousand a year out of *five*; and all his ready money was gone:—he knew that his mother could not long remain a stranger to his excesses, and was sensible how much the knowledge would cost her:—he execrated the Colonel and cursed the Signora; but that availed nothing. After many different plans designed and as often laid aside, he determined to send for Mr. Thornhill the

next day, to open his whole heart to him and entreat his advice in what manner to act.—Happy had it been for him had he always determined so wisely ! Lady Beaumont rejoiced to find him so well recovered, endeavoured to amuse him and raise his spirits; whilst she was so employed, a servant entered and delivered a letter which he had no sooner read than a violent exclamation excited Lady Beaumont's curiosity : " Does it come from either of your quondam friends ? " demanded she. " O, madam, (replied Sir William,) how shall I confess my folly, my imprudence ! when I took this house for the abandoned woman who has deserted me, the lease was fifteen hundred pounds ; the writings were drawn and mutually signed, and I gave her the money to carry the following day and receive the counter part of the lease ; she told me she had done so, and I believed it ; this letter comes from the attorney, desiring me to appoint a day when he may wait upon me with the lease and receive the money.—What a horrid deceitful woman, and what

what an egregious dupe I have been!"—
 "Tis really a painful affair, (said Lady Beaumont,) and I heartily wish this may be the only deception. You had best let your servant make proper enquiries among the trades-people." Much vexed and mortified, he acceded to the proposal, and the servant was accordingly sent round: on his return he brought word there were bills due at every house, and the amount would be sent in the following day—in fine the next day brought in bills for upwards of two thousand pounds, besides jewellers' and silversmiths' bills for near four thousand more; all which debts he had given the lady money to discharge; but as he went with her to order most of the things, and could produce no receipts, he was sensible he had no redress;—however unhappy all this made Lady Beaumont, she forbore reproaches, because she saw her son deeply afflicted. "As you have about seven thousand pounds in the hands of Mr. Thornhill, (said she,) you had better draw on him in order to settle these demands, than sell

out of the bank." This last observation made him tremble; but recovering himself; "I will send and request the favor of Mr. Thornhill's company, he replied; and consult him on the state of my affairs."—"Do so, (said her ladyship;) and if I may be permitted to advise, despoise of this house, and either return to me or take a handsome set of apartments without encumbering yourself with house-keeping 'till you are married. Bachelors are always liable to great impositions from every body."

The following day Sir William found very little remains of his illness, except a languor, which arose from inquietude of mind; he still persevered in his resolution of mentioning the state of his affairs to Mr. Thornhill, without the least reserve, and when that gentleman called on him agreeable to his request, the whole was laid before him. Mr. Thornhill could scarcely believe that such immense sums should have been dissipated in so short a period of time, but
entering

entering into the business with a friendly zeal; he proposed to Sir William to discharge all his debts with the trades-people immediately, and added that he would advance money to clear the estate and pay off the sums for which the annuities were granted; that he would take all the remaining debts on himself, receiving only common interest for the money he advanced, which would be near a thousand a year in the Baronet's pocket, such exorbitant interest had he agreed to pay, and if Sir William would appropriate that saving to paying off the mortgage, a few years would clear the estate.—These very friendly proposals were accepted with joy.—

“Not only the thousand a year you will save for me, (replied Sir William, but six hundred pounds more shall be employed in discharging my debts—I will live on the remaining four hundred pounds.—Perhaps I may go abroad in search of Lord Stormer: our situations are similar, and I am convinced he has found the necessity of reformation as well as myself: we both owe our ruin to the

same cause." "Your resolution is certainly very commendable, said Mr. Thornhill, but I see no necessity for your quitting England, you may reside as usual with Lady Beaumont,) four hundred pounds a year will keep your servant and horses, and answer common expences." "No, (replied the Baronet, I never can submit to that: I will certainly go abroad and travel frugally. I know my plan will give some pain to my mother, and must trust to your friendly endeavours for reconciling her to it."

Matters being thus settled, Mr. Thornhill undertook the disagreeable office of giving Lady Beaumont all particulars: 'tis needless to mention her grief and vexation at so alarming a detail, so little expected; but she agreed to her son's proposal of going to the Continent without much reluctance, the fact was, she thought travelling would improve his understanding and fortify his mind; new objects and new situations might give a steadiness to his disposition, and her only objection

jection was his want of a proper companion, so necessary for one unacquainted with foreign manners and customs; and this obstacle Mr. Thornhill hoped, he said, to remove, as he knew a young man of the name of Thompson, very worthy, and about Sir William's age, who had been intended for the physical line, had studied some time at Glasgow, and then travelled through France, Italy and Germany, with a gentleman of fashion, who was an invalid—the death of Mr. Thompson's father, who enjoyed a lucrative post, but saved very little from his income, prevented his son from prosecuting his studies, and he was now anxious to accompany some gentleman abroad.—“ Well then, my dear Mr. Thornhill, (replied Lady Beaumont,) let us, if possible, engage him as a companion for William. I intend adding four hundred pounds a year to my son's income; and I would willingly allow Mr. Thompson two hundred. Mr. Thornhill doubted not, he said, but the offer would be accepted, and
told

told Lady Beaumont he would introduce Mr. Thompson the next day.

When Sir William met his mother it was with conscious shame and evident confusion; she saw and pitied him; and without the least observation on the communication made to her of his affairs, addressed him with much complacency. "I approve, my dear William, of your intended tour to the Continent; our good friend has promised to procure you an eligible companion, and it shall be my care to supply you with the means of making a genteel figure, if you cannot make a superb one."—"Your goodness, madam, replied he, affects me more sensibly than your reproaches would have done; because it is unmerited: but, henceforth, I hope you will have no cause to blush for your son—as to pecuniary favors, you must permit me to decline them; you shall not deprive yourself of any thing on my account; I will live within my income." "That is a point I will not permit you to dispute with me;

(answered she) I can do what I intend without the smallest inconvenience, having always saved from the handsome jointure your dear father left me; therefore no more words on that subject." She then proposed an airing to him, adding, she would call on Lady Stanley and see her niece, whom she meant to take home with her.—"I have deserved mortification, said Sir William, faintly, smiling, and must be content to endure it."—"Tis the constant fruit of folly; replied she, in the same tone, but hasten to dress." They were received by Sir Edward and Lady Stanley in so friendly a manner that Sir William recovered his spirits, and no disagreeable retrospect being made, he mentioned his intended tour, "for the purpose of *gaining* knowledge, (said he gaily,) and *forgetting* all I already know."—His good friends approved his design. "*Apropos*, (said Sir Edward) I have received a letter from Lord Stormer, who appears to be in the high road to reformation; he mentions you in a very friendly manner, and foresaw this tour of
your's,

your's, which the kindness of *your joint friends* projected for both of you; and therefore, if you meet, you may console each other; but to be serious, added he, I entertain very promising hopes of Lord Stormer, and if you should take Bruffels in your way, I think you will find in him a desirable companion."

"I shall be happy to profit by his acquaintance; (replied Sir William,) some trouble was taken to give us an ill impression of each other, but I hope bitter experience dearly bought has made us both wiser."

CHAP.

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CHAP. XXI.

THE FATAL CONSEQUENCES OF AN INDUL-
GENCE OF THE PASSIONS.

LADY Beaumont, after taking leave of her friends with grateful thanks for their attention to Miss Maybank, returned with her son and niece to her own house, where she met a shock equally severe with any she had lately gone through, a letter was delivered to her which she knew to be the hand writing of Mrs. Wilkins, breaking the seal hastily she read the following contents.

“ Dear

“ Dear and ever honoured madam,

It is with much reluctance I am compelled to give pain to a heart like your's, but I think I dare not conceal my own fears any longer. The dear young lady you kindly sent us as a companion has been long in a very languishing way, indeed she has never been quite well; but, within this last month she is entirely altered; she is reduced to a shadow, has a constant slow fever, very little rest and no appetite—last week, after many objections on her part, I spoke to our apothecary to visit her, he assures us she is in a rapid decline; she takes some medicines, but says her disorder is beyond the doctor's skill; she begged me not to mention her situation to you, as in her letters to your ladyship she always represented herself as well; but my conscience would not permit me to be longer silent—I grieve for her as if she was my own child, for she is the best and sweetest young lady I ever knew. Whatever your commands are in this case, shall be obeyed by your ladyship's

ever obliged and faithful servant,

Mary Wilkins.”

Lady Beaumont read this letter with evident distress; and, when she had finished it, tears involuntarily burst from her eyes. Sir William, much alarmed, asked if he might be permitted to look over the letter? "Yes, (said her ladyship,) but it will wring your heart as it does mine."—He was indeed, distressed, and rising hastily from his chair he retired to another room: Lady Beaumont observing Miss Maybank was extremely uneasy, told her, that a young friend of theirs under some particular distresses, whose mother was abroad, was extremely ill without any friend near her, and that she felt much perplexed how to act:—She was interrupted by the return of her son: "I will go down to Exeter, said he abruptly; I will see her once more be the consequence what it may."—"Good Heaven, (replied his mother,) you are not in earnest sure?" "Never more so: I would not quit England without seeing her for worlds.—Oh, that villain, Minors, what has he not to answer for!"—"Miss Maybank withdrew:—"I am the properest

properest person to go:" answered Lady Beaumont." "We will go together, (said he hastily.) My dear mother let us lose no time." "Well, replied she, if you are determined we will go together and set off to-morrow. I will send my niece again to Lady Stanley, who will rejoice in having her: poor girl, she has only met hitherto with confusion and trouble! I will try to prevail on Miss Rivers to accompany me to Town, in which, as you are going abroad, there can be no impropriety; and change of air perhaps may be of service to her." Lady Beaumont then went to Miss Maybank, and having mentioned the necessity she was under of visiting the young lady under such melancholy circumstances; "I will not, (my dear niece, said she,) ask you to accompany me in a journey which can afford you no pleasure: Lady Stanley will think herself obliged to you for another visit, and will introduce you to her select friends; I must depend upon your good nature to excuse my going without you." Miss Maybank assured her, she

she was only sorry for the occasion of her intended absence, and that she should derive both pleasure and profit to herself by residing with Lady Stanley, whom she already greatly respected.

This being settled, her ladyship wrote a note to Lady Stanley, accounting for her journey in the same manner she had done to her niece. Sir William also wrote to Mr. Thornhill, desiring him to get his house and furniture disposed of against his return, which he supposed might be in less than a fortnight, and to pursue his intentions respecting settling his affairs. This being done, preparations were made for their journey. They ordered a hired carriage, and her ladyship's woman and one footman were to be their only attendants.

The following morning Lady Stanley came to fetch Miss Maybank, and the others set off on their journey. "I have yielded to your eager wish of accompanying me, said
Lady

Lady Beaumont to her son, although I know no good purpose it can answer; for I very much doubt if Miss Rivers will see you; indeed I fear your presence may be attended with disagreeable effects." "I hope not, said he, and I hardly know why I wish to see her; but I know I should be extremely miserable to be in suspense about her real situation. Why was she sent so far off?—Lady Beaumont gave her reasons, which he acknowledged to be just ones; and they proceeded with all the speed possible on their journey.

When arrived at Exeter, Lady Beaumont wrote a note from the inn to Mrs. Wilkins, that she might prepare Miss Rivers to receive her. After taking some refreshment, she left Sir William, under much agitation of mind, and drove to Mrs. Wilkins's.—When the carriage stopped, Mrs. Wilkins flew out to receive her, but it was evident she had been in tears. "O my dearest lady, how happy I am to see you, exclaimed she.

"I

“ I thank you, my good Mrs. Wilkins.— How is Miss Rivers ?” “ Ah, madam, very ill indeed. I broke it out as tenderly as I could, that your ladyship was come;— poor thing ! she was ready to faint ; joy and sorrow overpowered her, she said ; joy to see you once more, and sorrow that you should have taken so long a journey on her account ; for I owned to her I had written to you. Alas ! poor dear creature, she will not long see any body, I believe.” “ God forbid ! said Lady Beaumont, earnestly ; but go up and let her know I am here.” Mrs. Wilkins went up stairs, and her ladyship remained in the parlour under great anxiety of mind. At last she heard footsteps, and rose to follow the messenger ; but what was her surprise and grief when the door was thrown open, and she saw a pale emaciated figure, supported by Mrs. Wilkins, enter the room, and, before she had power to prevent her, Miss Rivers threw herself on her knees, and fainted at the feet of her benefactress.

Lady

Lady Beaumont, very much terrified, assisted in recovering and raising her into an arm chair, tho' her own situation was little better. She was in truth extremely shocked to see the very great alteration in the person of Miss Rivers; but, endeavouring to recover herself, she kindly blamed her for coming down, and for deceiving her as to the state of her health. "Alas, my dear madam, said she, I ought rather to blame the well-meant kindness of my good friend here, which has given you the trouble of so long a journey to so little purpose."—"Say not so, my dear girl, answered her ladyship; I only regret I did not come sooner; but I flatter myself, that, knowing how much I esteem you, for my sake you will endeavour to get better; and as I shall be shortly left with only a worthy amiable girl, my niece, perhaps you will return with me, and be introduced to her; I shall rejoice to procure for her a companion so deserving as yourself." "Oh, madam! cried Miss Rivers bursting into tears, your goodness overpowers me.

me. Once indeed I might have wished for the honor you mention; but I never was deserving of it; for early in life I was vain, unthinking, and dissipated." "We will not look back, interrupted Lady Beaumont, it can answer no good end; I am come to enliven your solitary hours; to administer comfort to your mind, and see that proper care is taken of your health." "You are too kind, replied Miss Rivers; but I am convinced no medicines can restore me; I have no disorder but a broken heart, and for that there is no cure. My mother, my poor unhappy mother, has forgot her worthless child—only one letter have I ever received, and that contained merely an account of the pleasures she enjoyed, mixed with expressions of astonishment at my obstinacy in depriving myself of the same enjoyments. Ah, what must be her feelings when reduced to a state of weakness like mine!" Lady Beaumont observing she appeared quite spent and faint with talking, desired she might be assisted up stairs, and when with difficulty they got

her up, and obliged her to take a little refreshment; her ladyship made her lie down on the sofa, whilst she sent for a physician.

To amuse her mind, she related to her the marriage of Colonel Minors, his desertion of his lady, and his elopement with the Signora; but she took care not to mention Sir William. "Poor Mrs. Minors, said Miss Rivers! How dreadful it is to be deceived and abandoned by the man we love, and to know that our own folly deserved the punishment; yet, happily for her, she has a parent to receive and console her." After a little hesitation, she continued, in a faltering voice: "You said, my dear madam, you should soon be left alone. Is Sir William married?"—"No, my love, (answered her ladyship, pleased that she had mentioned him,) he has no engagement of that sort, but is going abroad."—"May he be happy (returned she, sighing,) wherever he goes!"

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The physician being arrived, he said she had a strong nervous fever, and was no doubt extremely weak; that she must be carried into the air, and take nourishment very frequently, which, with strengthening cordials, he hoped would be of service to her. Lady Beaumont followed him out, and asked his opinion; he told her, he was sorry to say the young lady's complaint appeared to him beyond the reach of medicine. "She may possibly hold out a few days, or a week or two, added he; but in cases like her's there is no perfect judgment can be formed."—With a heavy heart and dejected countenance Lady Beaumont returned to her young friend, who, on her entrance, said, faintly smiling, "I see your kind concern for me, my dear madam; in your looks I can read a confirmation of my own opinion, and I must say, of my ardent wish: A very short time will release me from all my sorrows." Do not despair, my dear Miss Rivers, said her ladyship; you know not how much may be done to restore your health by the atten-

tion of your friends, by air and gentle exercise." "Tis all in vain, replied she; I am too weak for exercise. Could any thing restore me your presence would do it; but 'tis impossible. How good, how compassionate you are! (continued she, observing Lady Beaumont in tears;) but do not add to my regrets the idea of giving pain to that bosom, the seat of every gentle virtue. I have long been endeavouring to prepare myself for the awful hour, which now approaches; and, I trust, my penitence will be accepted. Happy has it been for me that I have been afflicted, for, otherwise years might have passed away in dissipation and folly, and a sudden disorder have cut me off unprepared. Rejoice with me then, my dear madam, that I have had time allowed me to repent. What would I give if my poor mother was here to view me now!—Such a sight would strike conviction on her mind more than volumes of advice." Lady Beaumont, perceiving she was faint and exhausted, persuaded her to lie down and

try to rest, whilst she returned to the inn:— She readily obeyed, for it was with extreme difficulty she had supported herself so long; and kissing Lady Beaumont's hand passionately, "May Heaven bless you, my dearest madam, exclaimed she, for all your kindness to an unfortunate girl! May you live to see your best hopes realized in the happiness of your family."

Her ladyship having recommended Miss Rivers to the care of Mrs. Wilkins, returned to the inn, oppressed with sorrow. Sir William, who had waited her return with anxious impatience, eagerly enquired how she left Miss Rivers? "I will not flatter you, she replied; in all probability she has but a few days to live." "Good Heaven, madam, said he, what do you tell me? Is it possible she is so very ill, and have I been the cause of reducing her to despair and death? O, I must, I will see her; if she will accept of my broken fortunes, I will marry her. Who knows what effect my resolution,

my penitence, and vows of love may have upon her?" Lady Beaumont shook her head; "I fear 'tis now too late to save her, said she; but, if you are in earnest, write; and I will take the letter. You must not obtrude yourself into her presence; the surprise might prove fatal; I will plead for you; happy should I be if I could succeed in restoring her! But do not give way to hope, for I entertain none in your favor."—Under the most painful inquietude of mind Sir William retired to write to Miss Rivers, and his mother embraced the opportunity to inform Miss Maybank of their safe arrival at Exeter.

When her son returned with his letter, she readily accorded with his impatience to renew her visit to Miss Rivers, at the same time advising him to take a walk, and calm the agitation of his mind.

When her ladyship came to Mrs. Wilkins's, she was informed Miss Rivers had
just

just been recovered from a fainting fit which had left her exceedingly weak and low: on entering her apartment she saw a very visible alteration, and was in some doubt about mentioning her son's letter; but Miss Rivers having taken some cordial drops which the doctor had sent, was much revived and began to talk with some degree of ease; Mrs. Wilkins and the nurse left the room, when Lady Beaumont, tenderly pressing her hand, said, "Do not be surpris'd my love, if I have undertaken to plead in behalf of a repentant sinner, one who has been led into the commission of his errors by very bad advice and profligate examples, but whom misfortunes and painful experience have restored to reason; he is deeply sensible of his faults, and earnestly desires to atone for them to the utmost of his power."—"I will not pretend to misunderstand you, madam, answered Miss Rivers, and I have now, I hope, obtained sufficient composure to talk on a subject which was for a long time grievous even to think of; towards Sir William

Beaumont I retain not the smallest degree of resentment, and I entreat you to tell him I even esteem him, and sincerely pray for his happiness." "Well then, my good girl, in such a disposition of mind you will not refuse to read this letter; I will step into your dressing-room; consider it with attention, comply with our joint wishes and we may all of us yet see many happy days together." So saying, her ladyship withdrew into the adjoining room, and, with trembling hands, Miss Rivers broke the seal and read the following contents:

TO MISS RIVERS.

"Madam,

Did not my mother condescend to be herself the messenger of my wishes and the bearer of this letter, I know not that I should ever have summoned resolution enough to address you, whom I have irreparably injured: you, who must despise and detest me. I might, indeed, plead that I

was

was deceived by a villain, that I was misled as to your character, and taught to believe the offers with which I dared to insult you, would have been readily accepted; nay, that they were even wished for: I might with truth plead this; but I *ought* to have known you better; I *ought* to have seen that real innate worth, that strict purity of sentiment which influenced you to treat those offers with the contempt they deserved, and to despise the unworthy writer—I feel and acknowledge, with conscious shame, that I merited the disdain I have incurred:—and now, madam, I have no reparation to offer worth your acceptance, unless, from uncommon generosity, you will deign to compassionate a man broken in his fortunes, unhappy in his mind, a man reduced to a comparative state of indigence and dependence on the best of mothers:—many are the afflictions I have caused her; will Miss Rivers condescend to reconcile her to her unworthy son? will she, by a generous acceptance of his vows, become the daughter, the com-

forter of this excellent parent, and constitute the happiness of a man whose study it shall be to prove his sense of the obligation?—hear that dear parent plead for her son; and condescend to admit to your presence,

Dearest madam,

Your truly devoted

WILLIAM BEAUMONT.”

’Tis difficult to describe the various emotions which agitated the mind of Miss Rivers during her perusal of this letter—the delicacy he had observed in ascribing her contempt of him to the offers he had made her of a settlement; the compliments he had paid her heart and understanding, with the idea of conferring an obligation on his mother and himself, all crowded with force on her mind, and, for a moment, excited a wish that she had been in circumstances to have accepted his offer—“ah! cried she, had I conducted myself properly, had I been open and generous in my attachment, instead of employing artifice and duplicity, what a happy

happy fate might mine have been in such a family! but, perhaps, even then, the pleasures of life might have seduced me into a thousand errors.”—again she read the letter, and painful remembrance caused a violent burst of tears.—

Lady Beaumont, who heard her sobs from the next room, hastened in to comfort her, and folding her arms round her, “Compose yourself, my dear child, said she, consider me as your mother in every sense of the word”—“O, exclaimed the poor girl, that I indeed had been blest with such a mother! alas, *my* poor mother pursues a fleeting shadow, and sacrifices real happiness to vanity and empty pleasures; how will she regret on the awful bed of death, every hour spent in folly and dissipation, without one good or generous action to compensate for the weeks and months so idly thrown away! “Do not, my dear girl, give way to unavailing sorrow; let me indulge the sweet hope of calling you daughter:—poor William is indeed unwor-

thy your acceptance, for he is literally poor; his fortune is gone, and his peace of mind destroyed: think then what an obligation you have it in your power to confer on me and on my only son." "Do not urge me on this subject, my dear madam; I cannot bear it now; I will consider every thing, and this night, if I have strength to write, will answer Sir William's letter; mean time, tell him, I retain no anger; I never, even in thought, upbraided him; for I deserved the punishment my folly and weakness brought upon me. The unutterable obligations I owe to your bounty and goodness are imprinted on my heart, and have long since effaced the remembrance of any supposed injury received from Sir William;—but is it possible he is now at Exeter?"—"He is, replied her ladyship, and dying with impatience to see you."—"That cannot be, said Miss Rivers, I feel myself unequal to the trial; and I hope, when he has my answer to his letter, he will give up the idea." Lady Beaumont having seen her composed

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in bed, and given strict orders to be called should there be any apparent alteration, left her, to return to her son, after desiring Mrs. Wilkins to get a bed put up for her the next day in her house. When her ladyship repeated to Sir William the conversation between herself and Miss Rivers, he was violently agitated, and finding there was likely to be some difficulties in having his offer accepted and even in seeing her, his natural impetuosity made him almost raving, and his eager desire of marrying her exceeded all bounds. His mother found great difficulty in subduing his transports, and prevailing on him to be calm 'till he had her letter. In the morning she sent to know how Miss Rivers had passed the night, and was informed tolerably well, likewise that she had been up very early and written the letter which was sent by the messenger. With much emotion Sir William broke the seal and found the following contents :

TO

TO SIR WILLIAM BEAUMONT.

“ Sir,

The unexpected contents of the letter you have honored me with, deserve my grateful thanks; and I will candidly own there was a time when the offer you have now made me, would have been received with transport; though, even at that time, I was every way unworthy of being your's. When first you knew me I was gay, unthinking and imprudent, with no views nor hopes but what centered in grandeur and dissipation. Unfortunately I had no monitor, no friend who could, either by precept or example, teach me to correct my errors. The rock on which most females are wrecked is a wrong education, brought up to exist but in dress, admiration and pleasures I had no leisure to improve my mind, and a few showy superficial accomplishments were to be my passport to greatness and general notice.

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The death of my father reverfed all my expectations: reduced to a state below mediocrity, we were obliged to shrink from that observation we had coveted to obtain. Time proved to us the little fincerity of thofe professions which pafs current in the world under the mask of friendship—we found ourfelves deserted by *all*. There is no crime like poverty in the opinion of the world—my poor mother could not eafily refign all her hopes, her partiality for me led her to believe my few attractions might yet procure me an advantageous marriage—'tis needlefs to mention her difappointments—a little bufinefs brought us to London, accident informed us that Lady Stanley was in Town—that lady had been fingular in her kindnefs to us during our firft diftreffes; my mother thought it a duty to wait on her; there, fir, I firft faw you, and you know all that followed. Ambition was my firft inducement to engage your notice, but in feeking to entangle you, I loft myfelf. O, let no young woman ever think fhe ftands fecure, or per-

mit private interviews and unguarded freedoms! let modesty and delicacy be the guardians of her honor, or she is lost for ever! a contrived *tête-à-tête* on my side, with shame I confess it, and a desire of bringing you to an open avowal of your designs, proved my destruction—let me fly from the remembrance—the consequence is too well known to you. Misfortunes are oftentimes necessary to curb folly and vice, I found it so; despicable in my own eyes, I no longer looked forward with exultation or hope, and every step my mother took was entirely unknown to me. The letter you sent me, though it wrung my heart, completed my reformation. I beheld in your sentiments the opinion of mankind, and the general judgment formed of those females who, divested of fortune, seek by dress and frivolity, to attract notice which can never be attended with esteem. I resolved to retire from the world and atone, by mortification and repentance, for the errors of my conduct. Your generous, your blessed mother, furnished

nished me with the means of doing so beyond my hopes or wishes. I have found myself, ever since my arrival here, gradually declining: do not, I beseech you, sir, accuse yourself:—*I* only am to blame; but I trust a sincere penitence will be accepted; and I now feel ten thousand times more delight in the idea that a very short time will release me from misery and self-reproach, than ever I experienced in pursuing my brightest hopes when in full health—and now, sir, while I acknowledge, with gratitude, my sense of the undeserved offer you have made me. You will see the impossibility of my profiting by it; and, permit me to say, in justice to myself, that, were I sure to recover and live for years, I never would pollute the vows of hymen, nor by the specious name of marriage screen myself from the censure of the world, and give an unworthy daughter to my generous benefactress. May you, sir, live to convey to her the highest of all pleasures, a perfect approbation of your conduct,—may you by a happy union with a truly virtuous
and

and amiable woman, smooth the down-hill of your mother's days with peace and comfort, and may you obtain that highest of all earthly joys, a self-approving conscience! My last breath shall expire in imploring blessings on Lady Beaumont and her family,

ANNA RIVERS."

To describe the feelings of Sir William on reading this letter, would be impossible; "There, madam, cried he, throwing it upon the table, read the destruction of all *my hopes*." he covered his face with his hands, in an agony beyond what he had ever felt:—grief, admiration and regret at once assailed him; he cursed the Colonel, the mother and himself, like one deprived of reason.

Lady Beaumont having perused the letter, could not restrain her tears—"My dear William, said she, you must submit: was there any possibility of her recovery I would never cease importuning her in your favor,
but

but now it would be the utmost cruelty to urge her on the subject and disturb her serenity at this awful period: from the same motives I hope you will give up all desire of seeing her.”—“No, madam, answered he impatiently, I must see her:—Intercede for me, I conjure you! let her admit me but once to her presence! to hear my pardon pronounced is all I ask.”—“The office you force upon me is a very unpleasant one, and I fear you would reap nothing but misery, even should your wishes be gratified.”

Lady Beaumont now prepared to attend Miss Rivers, whilst Sir William retired to his room, again to peruse a letter which was already engraven on his heart. When her ladyship stopped at Mrs. Wilkins's door, the good woman met her with eager impatience: “Ah, madam, cried she, I rejoice that you are come, the poor young lady is very ill indeed:—we think getting up so early and writing so long hurted her very much:—the doctor is with her now; but she is on the bed.”—

bed"—Lady Beaumont, much affected at this account, hastened up stairs, and met him at the top, just coming down—"How is your patient sir?" said she. "Very low indeed, madam; she is much altered since yesterday, and, I think, will scarcely hold out another day." "Good Heaven! exclaimed Lady Beaumont, are there, then, no hopes?" "I am sorry to say, madam, there are none; nature is nearly exhausted; the young lady is sensible of it herself, and appears perfectly resigned:—I will, however, look in upon her again in the afternoon, for I feel interested for her, and grieve that I can be of no service." Lady Beaumont, deeply concerned, entered Miss Rivers's apartment, she was still on the bed: seeing her ladyship she attempted to rise, but the effort was unavailing. "Excuse me, my dearest madam, for receiving you thus, was all she could say. "Compose yourself, my dear girl; I am come to sit by you, and I entreat you to continue as you are; I am only sorry to hear you have fatigued yourself so much this morning."

morning." "I had a tolerable night, she replied, and resolved to write, if possible, to Sir William; I hope he is satisfied; I would not, on any consideration, leave a regret on his mind which may hurt his peace." "I will not deceive you, my dear Miss Rivers; said her ladyship, William is very unhappy; he begs, he entreats you will see him: I promised to mention his request, but I wish not to give you pain; therefore do not let any consideration for me induce you to distress yourself on his account." Miss Rivers paused a little, but, at last replied, "Not long since, madam, it would have been worse than death to me to have seen your son, and I own I would avoid it still, if left to my choice; but, if he persists in his desire of seeing me, I will endeavour to support the interview, and the sooner he comes the better; I think I can be carried into the next room and lie as easy on the sofa as I do here." The nurse being called, she with some difficulty was conveyed to the adjoining apartment, and having taken some drops, appeared

appeared a little revived—Lady Beaumont sent for her son, though she dreaded the effects it might have on the poor declining object before her, who, she plainly saw, was past all hopes of recovery. She was very soon informed her son was come, and having sent down the nurse and given Miss Rivers a cordial to support her spirits, he was desired to walk up; when he entered the room and beheld the pale, emaciated, and almost lifeless figure lying on the sofa, he started with horror, but recovering he advanced hastily and threw himself on his knees by her side, unable to articulate a single word; she was violently agitated, but making an effort to speak she held out her hand and faintly said “Do not grieve”—he took her hand and passionately kissing it; “Forgive me, dearest Miss Rivers, cried he, pardon your murderer!” Do not call yourself so, you are not to blame; I forgive your error as I hope to be myself forgiven; mine was the fault, mine should be the punishment:” then pausing a little and seeing Sir William in tears—“you
have

have humanity and sensibility; continued she, cherish those virtues; pity the poor and unfortunate; respect virtue in distress; govern your passions, and consult the peace and happiness of your excellent parent." "O, Miss Rivers, answered Sir William, if you wish me to be happy try to live, or else everlasting remorse will be my portion."

"Death, returned she, is busy at my heart, but I welcome his approaches, and with joy behold the end of a painful journey through a world of falsehood and deceit, where virtue is neglected, and where vice, if gilded by riches, meets encouragement and applause."

"Do not fatigue yourself, my love, said Lady Beaumont, with talking too much, William had better withdraw and return again in the evening, if you will permit him."—"No, replied the poor girl, let me speak whilst I am able—"Dear Sir William be comforted—your sorrow distresses me.—I am going to be happy, I feel that I am; do not accuse yourself—but let my sad fate act like a talisman on your heart to guard you

you from indulging your passions:—and when you behold a poor unprotected female, be yourself the guardian of her honor. Believe me, when the hour arrives which takes us from the world, the reflection of one benevolent action performed, one vicious thought rejected, or one criminal pursuit given up, will afford you more real happiness, than would the fullest enjoyment of sensual wishes. God bless you! added she, may you live to encrease the happiness of your worthy parent!”—she withdrew her hand, and turned her head aside to conceal her emotion. Sir William who still knelt by her, a statue of despair, observing her evident distress, cried out; “Let me see you once more—O, Miss Rivers, if you wish me to live, let me return again in the evening!”—“She again extended her hand; “Leave me now; *to-morrow*, if I *can*, I will see you; but I am very ill, and you must go—Heaven bless you!” “Yes, cried he, starting up, I will go—dearest of women, you shall be obeyed!—I will endeavor to support

support existence 'till to-morrow. — Adieu! added he, kissing her almost lifeless hand; *you may* forgive me, but never shall I forgive myself nor the miscreant whose villainous counsels have laid up for me everlasting remorse." He quitted the room under much agitation, and with evident reluctance.

"Thank Heaven, this interview is over, said Miss Rivers, after a short silence, poor Sir William! I respect his sorrow, and I hope the event which must soon take place, will have an effect upon his future conduct."

—She had scarcely uttered these words when she was seized with a faintness which alarmed Lady Beaumont beyond expression; however she soon recovered, but with such an increasing weakness and difficulty of breathing that she requested to be undressed and put to bed; this was at length effected, but with so much fatigue to her, that another fainting fit left her at the point of death: she desired the nurse to retire; then, taking Lady Beaumont's hand, she pressed it to her lips; "I am going my dearest Lady—forgive all the

trouble and sorrow—Heaven will reward your goodness to a poor imprudent girl—deserted by her natural parent—O, Almighty Father, continued she, folding her hands with fervour, pity and forgive my mother!—may she soon be sensible of the folly of those pleasures,—alas! how falsely called such—she now pursues—may she be happy here and hereafter—Father of mercies, hear my prayer!—she paused a moment on seeing Lady Beaumont drowned in tears; adieu, dearest, best of women!—in another world we shall meet again.—Bless Sir William for me.”—She grew very faint,—her ladyship hastily administered some drops. She could not swallow, but—making a great effort to speak, “Blessed Father, said she, thy will be done!”—and, with these words, scarcely audible, *expired!* thus fell the once gay, lively and agreeable Miss Rivers, a victim to the errors of education!

Lady Beaumont, overwhelmed with grief, had scarce power to ring the bell before she fainted;

fainted; and the nurse, on entering the room, gave a loud shriek, on seeing both ladies to appearance lifeless.—Mrs. Wilkins, running in, quickly observed what had happened; and, although most sincerely concerned for Miss Rivers, she directed her attention to the recovery of Lady Beaumont, who, when she regained her senses, they would have conveyed to another room; but she desired to remain, and with a violent burst of tears, kissed the clammy lips of her lifeless young friend:—she then sealed up the drawers and boxes, in presence of Mrs. Wilkins, and on opening the drawer of the dressing-glass, she found the following letter, addressed to herself:

“With a thorough conviction that this will be the last time I shall ever take up a pen, I write, dearest and most respected Lady Beaumont, to offer my heartfelt thanks for all the unmerited favors you have heaped upon me:—the remembrance of them is a cordial in my dying hours.—I feel, with joy,

the approach of that time which will release me from all my sorrows; and but one idea is now capable of giving me pain;—my poor unhappy mother—oh, madam! complete your goodness, and if you can find her residence, let her know my fate—tell her, I die a martyr to Vanity and Folly—that my last thoughts dwell on her, that I beseech her to give up the pursuit of pleasures which must end in bitter remorse—teach her, by your example, to learn how good, how glorious is virtue and benevolence! my thoughts ramble, the pen drops from my fingers—my dearest lady, may God Almighty ever bless you and your's with happiness here, and everlasting felicity hereafter!

Your ever grateful,

ANNA RIVERS."

Inclosed in this letter was a paper specifying she had forty-seven guineas in her cabinet: she desired all her clothes might be disposed of, and that after her funeral charges were paid, and a handsome present given

to Mrs. Wilkins, the residue might remain in Lady Beaumont's hands for her mother's use:—she requested, as the annuity of four hundred pounds a year ceased with her life, that the two thousand pounds with the interest due, might return to her mother: this sum, she observed, was sufficient to maintain her mother decently, and more than that was needless.

Lady Beaumont, determined to fulfil these several wishes in the strictest manner, and as her contempt for Mrs. Rivers rose in proportion to her regret for her unfortunate child, she made no scruple to resume the annuity granted to the latter, and thereby oblige the former to contract her expences and live within the bounds of her own fortune. Having desired Mrs. Wilkins to see the last duties performed in a genteel style, the expences of which she determined to defray herself, with a heavy heart and a melancholy countenance, she returned to the inn, where she found Sir William, under the

deepest concern, with the letter Miss Rivers had wrote to him lying on the table:—on her entrance he started, and looking earnestly at her; I see, madam, there are no hopes, cried he, your looks tell me I am a miserable wretch.”—“I will not deceive you; answered Lady Beaumont, you must arm yourself with resolution: my grief is little less than your’s; but we must submit to the decrees of Providence.”—“Good Heavens! what do you mean?—she is not dead, surely?” a deep sigh and a shake of the head from his mother at once informed him of the event he dreaded: he threw himself into the chair he had risen from, and clasped his hands; “She is dead, then, I have destroyed her!—how severely am I punished!—then, pausing a little, he started up:—Excuse me, madam, I cannot bear company now:” and, flying into his bed-room, he shut the door.

Lady Beaumont, who knew the violence of his passions, followed him. “William, said she, opening the door, I respect your sorrow,

forrow, nor do I forbid the indulgence of it: a heart deeply affected must feel in proportion to it's disappointments:—but do not forget you have a mother whose happiness is in your hands, and who deserves your consideration.” “Fear not, my dearest madam, that I will forget what I owe to your goodness:—suffer me to be alone for an hour or two, and I will join you, I hope, more composed.” Satisfied with this assurance, Lady Beaumont returned to her apartment, and sat down to acquaint her niece, that she had lost the friend she came to visit, and should very shortly return to London; she also wrote her solicitor, who had the paying of the annuity to Mrs. Rivers, requesting to know where that lady resided, and ordering all payments to be stopped after the next quarter.

Just as she had finished her letters, Sir William returned to her with a countenance in which grief was visibly impressed, but with a composure she hardly expected. He

desired to know the particular circumstances attending the decease of Miss Rivers, and wept abundantly at the recital.—“She is happy, said he, to grieve for her is selfish,—I mourn my own folly, and shall do so to the end of my life.—O, if I could but see the villain punished whose pernicious advice has ruined my peace I could die with transport!” “Doubt not, replied Lady Beaumont, of his punishment; even now in the gratification of his wicked contrivances, he must be miserable; and the hour will arrive when remorse of conscience will inflict torments more bitter than his greatest enemy could wish.” Sir William begged to have a lock of Miss Rivers’s hair to set in a ring, which Lady Beaumont promised to procure for him: they parted at an early hour; and the following morning she returned to Mrs. Wilkins’s and finished all her remaining business: the next day she set out for London accompanied by her son: he still preserved a deep melancholy, and she flattered herself the late awful event would have a deep effect upon his future conduct.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

THE RETURN TO LONDON.

ON arriving in Town Lady Beaumont hastened to Sir Edward Stanley's, being extremely impatient to see her niece; she was received with the warmest proofs of affection and esteem, although her friends were evidently hurt at the paleness and languor which pervaded her whole person; having an hour or two to spare, she chose no longer to keep Lady Stanley in ignorance of the fate of Miss Rivers, particularly as she judged it might afford a striking lesson to Miss Maybank; she therefore unfolded the

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whole

whole affair relative to Sir William and her, placed the character of Miss Rivers in the most amiable point of view, dwelt upon her repentance and exemplary death, and concluded with observing that although she could by no means exculpate her son, yet she thought the ill advice and dissipated conduct of the mother, had gone further lengths towards the ruin of the unfortunate girl, than any premeditated design on his part, or want of virtue on her's. Miss Maybank was drowned in tears and Lady Stanley overwhelmed with surprise during this recital. "Both Sir Edward and myself, said she, perceiving Lady Beaumont was silent, have entertained various conjectures respecting Miss Rivers, and, at one time, we supposed Sir William was fond of her; but when we understood she was gone to France with her mother, we gave up the idea, and imagined the embarrassment of their affairs had induced them to live abroad; that Mrs. Rivers had been imprudent and extravagant we well knew; but we pitied her reduced situation;
little

little did I suppose she was capable of deserting an only child and figuring away upon an income which ought to have filled her with shame and remorse!—what an unfeeling worthless woman she must be!—poor Miss Rivers!—may her sad fate awaken her infatuated mother to a sense of her unworthy conduct; and may it teach the youthful mind to subdue all visionary schemes of pleasure and greatness, and reconcile itself to the decrees of Providence!”

Miss Maybank returned home with her aunt, and next morning they had a visit from Mr. Thornhill and Mr. Thompson; the manners and conversation of the latter pleased Lady Beaumont extremely, and she flattered herself Sir William would derive great advantages from a companion so sensible and well-informed. Mr. Thornhill having settled all the Baronet's affairs on the most generous and friendly terms, little remained necessary to be done before the projected tour took place; and, after some con-

sultation, it was decided they should, that day week, set off for Germany. Mr. Thornhill acquainted her ladyship that his sister and Miss Raikson were married, and she promised to bring her niece to wait on those ladies; after the gentlemen went away Sir William was warm in his commendations of Mr. Thompson: "I have little doubt of his merit from his recommendation, returned her ladyship, and I hope you will be very happy in his friendship, but you are apt to be too sanguine in your hopes and wishes. There is no character perfect; and possibly some little shades may appear in Mr. Thompson; therefore don't expect excellence in any man, and then you will do justice to the merit he really possesses."

The following week was entirely taken up in preparations for Sir William's tour, and the business he necessarily had to do, added to the soothing manners and sprightly conversation of Miss Maybank, in some measure lessened, though it could not dispel his melancholy.

melancholy. He called to take leave of his friends, and amongst other places went to the house of Lady Summers; she was not yet gone out of Town, and, upon his name being sent up, received him: Mrs. Minors was in the room when he entered, and betrayed strong emotions; whether from considering him as a fellow sufferer, or from a heart naturally tender, which, disappointed in the object of it's affections, returned to the first person who had interested them, we will not pretend to determine: however, 'tis certain that when her first confusion subsided, she regarded Sir William with more than common attention, and when he mentioned his design of quitting England in a few days she burst into tears: after a little hesitation, "Sir William, said she, I have one favor to request of considerable consequence to me." Be assured then, madam, it will afford me very great pleasure if I can be serviceable"— "it certainly is in your power to oblige me; and as the favor I mean to ask can be attended with no great inconvenience to yourself,

self, may I exact your word of honor that you will comply with my wishes?" "*You may*, madam: satisfied *you* can require nothing impossible or unreasonable I pledge my honor to obey you." "You are very kind, sir; and I freely confess I thought it necessary to make such a preliminary, previous to my request, which is simply this, that you will avoid Colonel Minors, or rather Mr. Minors, for he has disposed of his commission: I am sensible the ill treatment you have experienced might warrant a severe revenge; his life, I grieve to say, is a worthless one, yet, should any rencounter take place between him and you, whatever were the consequences I should be miserable: do not, therefore, *seek him*; and if you should chance to meet, consider him in a right point of view, undeserving your notice." "I have pledged my honor, madam, said Sir William, and you shall find I will not forfeit it, whatever may occur: I respect your apprehensions, and will have a due regard to your peace." Mrs. Minors thanked him

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in the most lively terms, and then gave a different turn to the conversation: "I am going to accompany my grandmother for a few weeks into the country, said she, but at my return I shall be happy to cultivate an intimacy with your charming cousin, Miss Maybank, if she will allow me the honor of her acquaintance after the glaring improprieties of my conduct:" Sir William made a polite return to this compliment, and soon after took his leave. He was surprised at the great change in the manners and conversation of Mrs. Minors; her air of levity was exchanged for a modest decorum, her trifling unmeaning chat, for sentiment and good sense; she no longer appeared the same giddy young woman he had known a few weeks before; the vexations and mortifications she had so recently experienced, had done more to inform her understanding and regulate her conduct than a thousand lessons; so true it is, that adversity teaches wisdom and improves the mind.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE PARTING.

THE day now arrived on which Sir William was to quit England, and it was with very different sensations he prepared for this journey to what he felt when leaving Warwickshire for London: then all was exultation, hope and transport; *now*, ruined in his fortune, his peace of mind irreparably injured, disappointed in every wish and pursuit, and a dupe to treachery and deceit, he looked back with astonishment and dismay at his infatuation, and with bitter remorse
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on his conduct to Miss Rivers—what a multiplicity of painful events had taken place within the course of a few months! added to which, he beheld in Miss Maybank the woman formed to bestow happiness and ensure its permanency but who was cut off from his wishes by the folly of his conduct with which she was too well acquainted for him to entertain the least hopes of obtaining her esteem. Sighing deeply; “I feel, thought he, that I have sacrificed to dissipation and vice all hopes of felicity—this tour to the Continent will in all probability be a long one, for I will not revisit England till my peace of mind is restored.”—

Lady Beaumont, whose anxious tenderness had been employed in making every preparation for his journey which could administer to his pleasure or convenience, now entered the room, and observing the settled melancholy which pervaded his features, burst into tears: “My dear William, said she, do you feel any reluctance to go abroad? a more
than

than usual sadness has taken possession of your looks these two days past; do not go if the journey is not perfectly agreeable to you."—Taking her hand, which he respectfully kissed; "I assure you, madam, replied he, the tour is of all things the most desirable to me; I have no regret but leaving you, to whose maternal tenderness I am sensible I have made very ill returns: however, Miss Maybank will amply supply my place, and her company will reconcile you to the absence of your son." "I must own, said Lady Beaumont. I esteem it a peculiar felicity that I have her with me now—to part with you for the first time, and for so long a period, is an afflictive stroke, but if absence from your native country is likely to prove advantageous or even pleasant to you, I ought to submit without reluctance." Having entered into a particular detail respecting his income, she told him, if on any extraordinary occasion he was in pecuniary difficulties she would accept his bills to the amount of four hundred pounds. He warmly acknowledged

knowledged her goodness, but declared he
 was determined to live within his income.
 Mr. Thompson being now arrived, all par-
 ticular conversation ceased, and Lady Beau-
 mont supported herself like a heroine 'till the
 carriage was announced; she then sunk un-
 der the conflicts of her mind, and, with
 streaming eyes and a thousand embraces, re-
 commended her son to the care of Heaven:
 she entreated to hear very frequently from
 him, and repeatedly said, "Remember, dear
 William, *my* happiness is in your hands; be
 careful of yourself for my sake." When the
 Baronet advanced to take leave of his lovely
 cousin, whose sensibility had been much ex-
 cited by this scene, he was greatly agitated:
 "adieu, amiable Miss Maybank; to you I
 resign the best of parents:—may you both
 be happy as you deserve to be, and I can-
 not then be miserable!—Heaven bless you
 both! added he, and, darting out of the
 room, threw himself into the carriage; Mr.
 Thompson followed, and they drove off im-
 mediately, leaving both ladies drowned in
 tears.

tears.—Lady Stanley and Mrs. Warner very opportunely arrived to console them, and the latter lady said, “you remember, Lady Beaumont, my young friends whose story I related to you—they are to spend the day with me,—I came purposely to entreat the favor of your’s and Miss Maybank’s company to meet them; I must not be denied; you are unfit to be alone: my little friend, Louisa, has given you an example of fortitude, and I hope you will follow it.” “I will not refuse your invitation, my kind friend, replied Lady Beaumont, and, shall feel peculiar pleasure in being introduced to a lady I already highly esteem.”

After the ladies had left them, Lady Beaumont related to Miss Maybank the story of Louisa and Henry, which occasioned a great impatience in her to behold the heroine who could so nobly sacrifice her own happiness to parental authority. They dressed and went at the dinner hour to Mrs. Warner’s, where the company expected was assembled;

assembled ; on their entrance, Lady Beaumont being led to the top of the room, Mrs. Warner advanced with a lady apparently about twenty, her figure small but elegantly made, and a face, which, though not exquisitely handsome, was perfectly agreeable, with a sweetness and intelligence in her eyes which interested every beholder ; “ Permit me to introduce to your ladyship, said Mrs. Warner, my amiable friend Mrs. Harris, in whose favor you are already prepossessed.” “ I *am* indeed, replied Lady Beaumont, and shall be happy if Mrs. Harris will permit me and my niece to profit by her acquaintance.”—The young lady made a very polite answer and was then introduced to Miss Maybank : as the poet observes,

“ Great souls by instinct nearly are allied,”

these two young women were charmed with each other, and conceived a reciprocal esteem which promised to encrease as they became more intimate. The company was equally pleased with Mr. Harris, and this
amiable

amiable pair received that attention and respect which always attends virtue, and the observance of our first duties. The party separated at a late hour, mutually gratified with the pleasures of the day; pleasures in which neither scandal, politics nor cards were necessary auxiliaries to promote conversation or entertainment.

CHAP. XXIV.

A RECEIPT FOR MATRIMONIAL HAPPINESS.

THE following day after Sir William's departure Lady Beaumont, who had passed a restless night, and rose heavily depressed; with a view to divert her attention from unpleasant subjects, proposed a visit to
Lady

Lady Godfrey in a friendly way, as she was entitled to the compliment before the late Miss Thornhill, now Mrs. Hargrave; her niece gladly consented to attend her, and in the evening they made their appearance at Sir James Godfrey's in Saville-Row. Visits of ceremony being over, a large company of rank and fashion was assembled and Miss Maybank, being a stranger, attracted universal notice and admiration. Lady Godfrey received them with much distinction, and both ladies were charmed with the behavior of the new married couple.

Soon after Lady Beaumont's entrance, a very elegant young man was announced by the name of Sir Charles Frankly; Sir James flew to him. "This is indeed an unexpected happiness. My dear Frankly! cried he, I did not know of your arrival in England." "I came only yesterday, my first enquiries were concerning you; and having been informed of your present happiness, after devoting the morning to my brother, I determined

mined to come and congratulate you and Lady Godfrey." Sir James then introduced him to his amiable bride. All the company seemed prepossessed in Sir Charles's favor merely from his exterior appearance: it is certain that a handsome person is a great advantage even to a man: we feel disposed to ascribe to the well-looking a thousand amiable qualities which we never give plain people credit for, till we know they really possess them. Sir Charles Frankly, however, stood but little in need of a handsome person to recommend him, there was an elegance in his manners, a gentleman-like attention to the company, and a happy choice of sentiments expressed in the best language, which gave him a claim to universal esteem; but though politeness dictated a general civility, his eyes involuntarily turned to Miss Maybank whilst she blushed and felt confused, though not displeased at the distinction. Great part of the company having a variety of engagements, went away one after the other; but when Lady Beau-
mont

mont rose to take leave, Lady Godfrey, taking her hand, said, "I scarce think myself authorised on so slender an acquaintance, madam, to solicit that you will do us the favor to pass the remainder of the evening here; nor is it quite consistent with ceremony; added she smiling, but as I am very ambitious of being ranked in the number of your friends, and wish to have the happiness of being better known to Miss Maybank, will you have the goodness to oblige us?" Lady Beaumont, observing by Miss Maybank's eyes, the invitation was agreeable to her, accepted it without hesitation, and putting her niece's hand into Lady Godfrey's, "Receive then, my dear Lady Godfrey, said she, this dear girl as your friend, and permit me to say, she is not undeserving the distinction I wish to procure for her." Both ladies were gratified by the compliment, and Sir Charles having accepted a like invitation, they all spent a most charming evening.

When Miss Maybank retired to rest she found sleep had forsaken her pillow, a retrospection of the evening caused a restlessness she was wholly unaccustomed to; she remembered Sir Charles Frankly's person with pleasure, his sentiments were congenial with her own, and she could not resist an ardent desire of appearing as agreeable in his eyes, as she confessed he was to her—she dwelt with pleasure on the idea of being particularly noticed by him, and for the first time in her life was ambitious of being distinguished by a *gentleman*. In the morning when she appeared at the breakfast table, her aunt took notice of a paleness, not usual, which she ascribed to its real cause, want of rest. “I am very much pleased, said Lady Beaumont, that you are likely to have such an agreeable friend as Lady Godfrey; Lady Summers, to whom both she and Sir James are well known, has given me the highest opinion of them. Lady Godfrey has had a most excellent education, she has all the accomplishments a young woman of fortune ought

ought to have ; and being brought up in the practice of every virtue under the best of parents, whose goodness and benevolence are almost proverbial, she possesses every amiable quality which can ensure domestic felicity ; nor is Sir James inferior to her in any respect ; and where mutual confidence, with an earnest desire to please, is felt on both sides, there is every prospect of permanent affection, and as much happiness as can be expected in this life. That romantic passion, which young people are taught from novels and romances, to believe absolutely necessary in married life, and to the indulgence of which they often sacrifice their best duties, seldom exists but in uncultivated minds, or where an obstinacy of disposition and strong passions predominate." "Then my dear aunt, said Miss Maybank, smiling, you do not approve love matches?" "Not such as are generally so called, replied her ladyship, not those matches which make a young woman desert her parents or guardians, and throw herself into the arms of a man on

whose principles she can have no reliance.”

“But, said Miss Maybank, are there not sometimes instances wherein parents are unreasonable, and where a pique against the man whom, from a prejudice in favor of another the young lady approves, or from motives of interest, they may endeavor to subdue a laudable affection, and to force the inclination contrary to its bias? in such cases, may not the daughter be pardonable if she is compelled to an imprudence, she would otherways have abhorred?” “No situations, my dear niece, can justify imprudence; that parents may sometimes be unreasonable I have no doubt; nor do I at all blame a child for refusing to marry the man she dislikes: an union without esteem must be a miserable state, and neither God nor man can approve it—all I wish to infer is, that a young woman should permit reason to guide her choice, that she should be well assured of a man’s principles before she indulges a too favorable opinion of him, and that whenever he solicits her to take any step contrary

trary to delicacy, modesty and duty, she should think him unworthy her esteem: and in cases, where a woman has no decided preference, and her friends point out a man as deserving of her, she should examine her heart and his merit, and if she finds she can esteem him, be assured she will run no risk in giving him her hand; for esteem soon produces warmer sentiments, and at length rises to a steady affection, founded on the worth of the object." "I subscribe to the justness of your opinions, madam, answered Miss Maybank, but methinks you banish all those delightful ideas that the poets and novelists ascribe to the power of love, which we are told is the principal charm of life." "Those writers, replied Lady Beaumont, have done a world of mischief, they have taught girls to languish for admiration, and to be impatient of becoming heroines of romance, to look out for adventures, and consider their parents as unnatural guardians, whom they must study to over-reach and deceive: they point love and marriage in such

glowing colours as never did or will exist; for perfect happiness is not to be found; and when a young woman gives up her time to such romantic studies, she forms expectations which never can be realized, permits fancy to supercede judgment, and lays in for her future life a source of vexation, disappointment and regret." "Yet, said Miss Maybank, I think love should be the groundwork of marriage." "I grant it, replied her ladyship, but it should be love founded on esteem, and not that passion which is raised by exteriors only, and which must end in disappointment and disgust when the object becomes familiar.

Love, in the married state can only be kept alive by sense, good-humour and an attention to please, even in the most minute things: no accidents can destroy the harmony of a pair whose sole delight is to oblige each other; no temptations can induce them to withdraw their affections, or wound the peace which rests securely on the bosom of
love

love and confidence—the amusements and gaities of the world, are with them but secondary pleasures which only serve to make domestic felicity more delightful; and the little rubs and unavoidable casualties to which mortality is subject, are rendered less poignant by a mutual desire of averting the stroke and administering consolation; such a pair live happy, and respected even by the profligate and thoughtless votaries of pleasure, and transmit to their children those good principles, which, if followed, must ensure the happiness of a rising generation. Heaven grant, my dear Louisa, added she, warmly embracing her, that such may be your lot, and pardon the garrulity of age which has run into such observations as I am persuaded you must frequently have heard from your excellent mother.”

C H A P. XXV.

A CONTRAST.

MISS Maybank had attended with pleasure to Lady Beaumont's discourse, when a servant entered with a letter, on opening which Lady Beaumont found the following contents :

“ Madam,

“ I was very much surprised at receiving a letter from Mr. Bayley, your solicitor, which informed me of the death of my daughter, and that you designed to withdraw
the

the annuity from me, which I think rather extraordinary, as I certainly was, and am a great sufferer by your son; my daughter's death I lay to his charge, and the dishonor reflected upon me by her imprudence, and his baseness is surely such as deserves all the amends in his power. You may remember, madam, you requested I would *accept* an annuity from you for the life of myself and my daughter; and although you thought fit to settle the annuity on her alone, yet, as a reparation ought to be made to me, and she made over the bond to my use, I think myself justly entitled to expect its continuance; and, indeed, have contracted some debts under that expectation, which I cannot well discharge if you withdraw your bounty: as to the two thousand pounds 'tis mine of course; and for the unfortunate girl who brought all this trouble on me, had it not been for her obstinacy, and perhaps the advice of other people, she might have accompanied me and have been alive and happy. I shall em-

power a person to call for all her effects, and hope you will not refuse the continuance of the annuity.

I am, madam,

Your most humble servant,

ANN RIVERS."

Indignation and astonishment overwhelmed Lady Beaumont for some moments, and she read the letter twice before she could give credit to its contents; that any woman could pass over so slightly the death of a child under such affecting circumstances, and be desirous of an annuity she could not receive but with dishonor, shocked her exceedingly; Mrs. Rivers's extravagance too, in contracting debts, when she had been so liberally supplied on quitting England, was unpardonable;—nevertheless, Lady Beaumont, after some deliberation, resolved to remit her two hundred pounds for the discharge of those debts, but absolutely to refuse

use any further connection or correspondence with her. Her ladyship answered the letter immediately, and after giving this abandoned woman leave to draw for the money, she lashed her most severely for her want of maternal affection, and for having, by her bad example and imprudent advice, sent her daughter an early victim to the grave: in short, she represented her conduct in it's true colours; but closed the whole by assuring her, "that although she withdrew the annuity and reprobated her behavior, yet, if hereafter she should endeavor to atone for her errors, she would find a friend in Lady Beaumont, who was ever ready to encourage repentance, though she would not administer to vice or extravagance."

Having dispatched this letter, which had recalled many very melancholy ideas, the ladies retired to dress for the opera, whither they were to accompany Lady Stanley in the evening. Miss Maybank reflected on the story of Miss Rivers, and no longer wonder-

ed at the errors of her conduct when she considered the depravity of her mother. Good Heaven, exclaimed she, had the parent of whom death has deprived me, been equally dissipated, extravagant and unprincipled, what errors might I have fallen into! —O, my dear, my revered instructress! may your Louisa live to prove the benefits arising from maternal tenderness and a bright example; may she be found deserving the approbation of the worthy few, and enjoy that conscious rectitude of heart which supported you under all your troubles, and enabled you to instil into the mind of your child those precepts of virtue which were indelibly imprinted by your own meritorious conduct! how great are the obligations of children to good parents!"—a sigh on the recollection of her father, burst forth—but as she never allowed herself to dwell on *his* failings, she hastily turned the current of her thoughts to other subjects.

Miss

Miss Maybank had never been at the opera; and, in a few minutes after her entrance, almost every glass in the house was levelled at her; unaccustomed to such general observation, she felt extremely confused and endeavored to shrink from notice by turning as much as possible from the audience, and directing her attention to the stage; but, in a short time, their box was filled with gentlemen, avowedly to pay their compliments to Lady Stanley but she readily judged her fair companion was the magnet; and was diverted at receiving the homage so evidently intended for another, whilst Sir Edward had enough to do in answering the repeated question of, "Who is that charming creature?" the young lady was by no means *insensible* to the curiosity she excited, though entirely indifferent to the persons who intruded themselves; 'till, by chance, throwing her eyes into the box, she met those of Sir Charles Frankly's intently fixed on her. He made her a profound bow, which she returned, feeling her face glow at
his

his unexpected appearance; she saw he was a stranger to Sir Edward Stanley, and that he therefore made no attempt to join the party; but, before the entertainment concluded, a gentleman in the same box with Sir Charles, talking frequently with Sir Edward, occasioned a sort of general conversation, which Sir Charles took the advantage of; and when the opera ended, presented himself at the box door, and offered his hand to Lady Stanley, Miss Maybank's being already engaged. As they waited in the coffee-room till their carriage could be drawn up, Sir Charles was introduced by his friend to Sir Edward; and, observing he was known to their young companion, the Stanleys paid him very flattering attention. When they were conducted to their coach, Sir Edward politely thanked him for his civility to Lady Stanley, adding, he should think himself happy to have an opportunity of cultivating his acquaintance; in consequence of which Sir Charles promised to do himself the honor of paying his respects to her ladyship very soon:

soon: Though he had little power of addressing Miss Maybank, she felt conscious that on her account he had sought to be known to the Stanleys, and she experienced so much pleasure from the idea, as on reflection gave her a little alarm, and, in spite of her endeavors to be cheerful, threw her into a train of thinking she wished for leisure to indulge. Lady Stanley spoke highly in praise of her beau as she called him, and observed that his appearance and address were elegant and pleasing; "I wonder, said she, from what part of the world this gentleman is emerged, for he is totally unlike the pretty fellows that croud public places; he is polite and well-bred without being a coxcomb." "I believe, answered Sir Edward, he is but just come from his travels, I have long had some little knowledge of his brother who introduced him to me this evening, and who is a very respectable young clergyman, but you are acquainted with Sir Charles, Miss Maybank; pray has he been long in England?" "I believe only a few days, replied she, I

met

met him the other evening at Sir James Godfrey's, with whom he appears to be a great favorite," "and so he is of mine, said Lady Stanley, for his politeness to an old woman."—"Don't be too vain on the distinction, cried Sir Edward, smiling, remember, he is fresh from a country where women are never *old*, and where men make no discrimination in their attention to the ladies in *public* at least." "Well, well, returned she, you shall not put me out of conceit either with my beau or myself, and I hope soon to be favoured with a visit from him." This chat brought them to Stanhope-street.

Lady Beaumont now asked her niece how she had been entertained? "Exceedingly indeed, answered Miss Maybank, the music and singing are delightful; the dancing would be equally so, but for an indelicacy in the dress of the performers, which is, in my opinion, an insult on the company; but, perhaps I am singular in the idea, as it did not
appear

appear to strike any person else in that light that I could perceive." "Custom, my dear, reconciles us to every thing: nevertheless, I am rather surpris'd that the good taste and delicacy of the English ladies does not make them endeavor to regulate such a violation of modesty, which, however it may suit the manners of the Italians, is contrary to the feelings of an English audience, but, indeed, we are making rapid strides to copy the follies and vices of other nations, while we neglect to adopt their virtues." After a few more general observations the ladies retired to their apartments; Miss Maybank felt an unusual depression of spirits, she was displeased with herself; What folly, thought she, to be interested about a man so little known! however specious his appearance, there is no judging of his morals or disposition from a casual acquaintance; let me therefore check this approbation of Sir Charles Frankly 'till a better knowledge of him shall either authorise my good opinion, or prove him unworthy of it; I should despise

pise myself, if, like a giddy girl, I suffered my eye to mislead my judgment.—“No, my dear mother! added she with fervor, your Louisa never will disgrace your lessons, or forfeit her own approbation.” Having endeavored to compose her mind, she retired to rest, with a fixed resolution to keep a strict guard on her inclinations and to be guided by wisdom and discretion only.

CHAP. XXVI.

AN UNEXPECTED OFFER.

THE following morning, just as Lady Beaumont was preparing to go out, she was informed Lady Summers and Mrs. Minors were at the door, she readily went
into

into the drawing-room to receive them, and sent her niece word of the visit. "Being about to leave Town for a few weeks, said Lady Summers on her entrance, I called to pay my compliments to your ladyship, and likewise to gratify the wishes of my granddaughter, who is desirous of being admitted in the number of Miss Maybank's friends." Before any reply was made Miss Maybank entered the room, and addressing both ladies with much politeness, Lady Summers repeated the request of Mrs. Minors, who added, "Unworthy as I may appear in your eyes, my dear Miss Maybank, I cannot relinquish my wish to be distinguished by your acquaintance, although I own myself undeserving the favor." "You do me, madam, both honor and pleasure, replied Miss Maybank, and I shall esteem myself fortunate to profit by your goodness: no one but yourself could ever make an observation so little to your advantage." "Amiable Miss Maybank, replied Lady Summers, I flatter myself you will have no cause to repent your condescension."

condescension." Turning to Lady Beaumont, she added, "I have had the pleasure of reconciling my son, Lord Summers, to his niece, on condition, indeed, that she never more lives with Mr. Minors, which I believe there is little reason to apprehend; and do you know that he is quite charmed with Miss Maybank," "with me, madam! said the young lady, I really do not recollect I ever had the pleasure of seeing his lordship" "Perhaps not, replied she, but he saw you twice in Kensington-gardens with Lady Stanley, and once at an auction, and I should not be surprised if you heard further on the subject, for with me he talks of nothing else; and I know not, if being told that Mrs. Minors sought to cultivate your acquaintance, did not plead more strongly with him to admit of a reconciliation than any thing I could urge." "Lord Summers does Miss Maybank honor by his approbation, said Lady Beaumont, but as it is founded on her appearance only, it may be

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too transient for her to value herself on the distinction."

Mrs. Minors having mentioned an intention of calling on Lady Stanley, the ladies all agreed to go together, and accordingly the carriages were ordered and they drove off.—On their return to dinner Lord Summers's ticket was delivered to Lady Beaumont with a card containing his compliments, and that he begged leave to pay his respects to her the following morning;—she was a little surprised, though in some degree prepared by what Lady Summers had told her, and, giving the card to her niece; "See, said she, the visitor you have procured me, for I doubt not but to *you* I must attribute a favor so unexpected." Miss Maybank read the card with more than indifference, with a kind of terror; and although she had no right to prescribe what visitors her aunt should admit, secretly wished this noble Lord a thousand miles off—however, she slightly remarked, that his Lordship's being prepossessed

prepossessed in her favor by appearance only, gave her no very good opinion of him: "But, perhaps, said she smiling, a more perfect view may destroy his predilection." Lady Beaumont was going to reply with some earnestness, when a letter was brought in, which, to her infinite joy, she saw came from her son; it was dated from Calais: they had an excellent passage, and were on the point of setting off for Lisle, and from thence meant to visit Brussels, having relinquished their intention of going through Germany till the spring should be farther advanced; Sir William gave a tolerable account of his own health and spirits, and concluded with his affectionate wishes for the preservation of his mother's and Miss Maybank's.

This letter, though short, greatly delighted Lady Beaumont, and she sat down to dinner with more than usual cheerfulness. They had agreed to accompany Lady Summers and Mrs. Minors to the play, for the latter no longer felt distressed by going into public.

public. — The ladies called in Stanhope-street, and, at an early hour, they all proceeded together to Covent-Garden to see the *Conscious Lovers* and *Comus*. They were scarcely seated in the stage box before, in the adjoining one, they observed Sir James and Lady Godfrey, Miss Raikson, Miss Gerrard and Sir Charles Frankly; Sir Charles evidently sought to obtain the notice of Miss Maybank, and Lady Godfrey whispered her; "To-morrow morning I intend calling on you; I have a thousand things to say; and though hurried to death by impertinent visitors, must, in compassion to a worthy friend, deny myself to-morrow, and fly to you." Miss Maybank, though much agitated, assured her, the visit would do her an infinite deal of pleasure; and the curtain being just drawn up, their attention to the stage prevented all further conversation. At the end of the first act, their box door was opened, and a gentleman appeared whom Lady Summers introduced as her son: Louisa received his compliments in some confusion, but instantly

stantly recognised in him, a gentleman whose very particular attention in Kensington-gardens had given her some pain, though she did not then know his name; and having at that time been displeased with him, she did not feel herself at all more disposed in his favor when he was announced as Lord Summers. He chose, however, to profit by his introduction, was particular in his attentions, and appeared so entirely engrossed by the pleasure of seeing her, as to neglect the amusement on the stage, and the company in the box. Miss Maybank, distressed at his devoirs, endeavored to disengage herself from his conversation by her attention to *Bevil and Indiana* in whose distresses she was deeply interested; but Lady Godfrey, pulling her sleeve, asked the name of her beau; in turning to answer her question she met the eyes of Sir Charles, and was surprised to observe, he appeared pale and dejected; the earnestness of his looks, and the melancholy visible in his countenance, disconcerted her, she blushed, and felt concerned: Lord Summers, however,

however, did not permit her to make much observation; he exerted himself to amuse her by his remarks on the performance and the company, which, at another time, and from another person, might have succeeded; but, at present, she experienced such painful sensations as deprived her of all power of being entertained, and she was truly rejoiced when the curtain dropped: she had been in tears during the last act of the play, which had drawn a hundred fine speeches on her sensibility from his lordship: when the play ended, she turned hastily to her aunt; "Do we stay the entertainment, madam?" "By all means, my dear, answered her ladyship, you will hear one of the first fingers in the world in the song of sweet echo." Though extremely fond of music, Miss Maybank, at this time, would gladly have given up the pleasure of hearing the song to be rid of her companion; she was, however, obliged to submit, and resolving to give her attention to the performance, she requested, in a grave tone, that his lordship would be silent;

he instantly complied ; but, at the conclusion of the piece, seized her hand to conduct her to her carriage ; she took leave of her friends in the next box, and received a very profound bow from Sir Charles, with a look expressive of so much sorrow as greatly affected her.

On their return to Stanhope-street she was evidently out of spirit, and begged leave to decline supper and hasten to bed. In the morning when they met at the breakfast table, Lady Beaumont exclaimed, " Upon my word, Louisa, you must give up raking ; your countenance tells me you have had no rest, are you not well, my dear ? " " A head-ach only, madam, she replied, which a little air will carry off ; and Lady Godfrey promised to call and take me in her carriage to Hyde-park." " I am glad of it, returned her ladyship, I must stay at home to receive Lord Summers ; but, as your name was not mentioned in the card, you are at liberty to dispose of yourself as you please."

Very soon after breakfast Lord Summers was announced, and Miss Maybank withdrew to the dressing room to wait for Lady Godfrey.

Lord Summers, on his entrance, apologized to Lady Beaumont for his early visit, which was prompted by impatience, he said, to open his heart to her on a subject of much importance to his happiness;” In fine, madam, added he, I wait on you to request your permission to pay my addresses to your charming niece; I am, ’tis true, some years older than Miss Maybank, but a man of forty with an excellent constitution, is not, I think, to be deemed an improper match for a young lady; my fortune is very considerable, and settlements shall be made equal to the highest expectations of her friends:—will you permit me to ask if the young lady has any pre-engagement?” “I believe, my lord, replied Lady Beaumont, I may venture to say she has not; but, on the subject your lordship has done me the honor to mention, I am not empowered to speak.

Lord Maybank, my brother, has the sole disposal of his daughter's hand; and, without his concurrence, I cannot admit any visits avowedly to address her." "I honor your prudence, madam, and to Lord Maybank I shall instantly write; but, may I flatter myself you will have no objection if I obtain his permission?" The power of accepting, or rejecting, my lord, does not lay with me; but yet, if you will permit me to speak my sentiments, I freely confess I think there is too great a disparity of years between you and Miss Maybank; for though, certainly, your lordship may be said to be in the prime of life, yet, my niece is so very young, that before she arrives at that period you must be far advanced; and the disproportion would appear much greater fifteen or sixteen years hence than even now." "I am sorry that is your opinion, madam, said he, evidently discomposed, but I am too much attached to Miss Maybank to relinquish the hope of being agreeable to her, though I will not presume to visit her without her father's sanction:

tion: I flatter myself I may depend on your ladyship's candour, and rest assured that you will not prejudice her against me?" "You may, my lord; and if my brother approves and my niece has no objection, I certainly shall think my family honored by your lordship's offer." This speech smoothed his brow, and with many compliments and professions of esteem for her ladyship, and adoration of Miss Maybank, he took leave. Previous to waiting on Lady Beaumont he had enquired minutely into the character of her brother, and gained a knowledge of his tyrannical mercenary disposition, with his present low connection, and little regard for his daughter; and as Lord Summers, though proud, haughty, and violent in his passions, was totally indifferent as to pecuniary matters, and, where rank abounded, never troubled himself about money, he wrote immediately to Lord Maybank, requesting leave to address his daughter, and offering such noble settlements without the least enquiry relative to her fortune, as plainly

proved his violent passion, and appeared expressive of great generosity.

In the mean time Lady Godfrey had called on Miss Maybank, and being shewn to the dressing-room was alarmed at the paleness of her countenance; "Are you not well?" she hastily cried, "Not perfectly so, answered Louisa, I have a head-ach, and did not rest well." "Ah! returned the other, smiling, but 'tis better to have the head-ach than the heart-ach, which is the case with my poor friend." "What friend?" asked Miss Maybank, "Sir Charles Frankly;" and seeing Louisa blush, "I see, added she, "You are conscious of the theft you have committed, and I hope disposed to make reparation for the offence: but, to be serious, my dear Miss Maybank, although I can boast but a very short acquaintance with you, I have been prevailed on by Sir James to acquaint you with a circumstance in which he is deeply interested. You have seen Sir Charles Frankly, therefore, of his person

person and manners I say nothing; but Sir James, whose judgment I have an implicit confidence in, assures me, he is sensible, well-informed and a man of strict morals and integrity; the sensibility and goodness of his heart, Sir James illustrated to me by a little anecdote which you must permit me to relate to you in his own words. The late Sir Charles Frankly, having lost an amiable wife soon after the birth of his second son, was for some months inconsolable; but time, which blunts the edge of affliction, subdued his, and before the year of mourning expired, he cast his eyes on a young Woman, who, born of poor but reputable parents, subsisted chiefly by her needle in going out to work for the neighbouring families — this unhappy girl he became enamoured of, and by those arts and contrivances in which mankind are too well versed, triumphed over her virtue, and rendered her wretched for ever. He was passionately fond of her, and his sons being at school, she lived in the house and governed his family with the highest reputation, a

person in her degraded state could possibly obtain : she had several children whom she lost ; and at the time of Sir Charles's death, which was about three years since, one daughter only remained, (who was placed at a boarding-school,) and two boys, the eldest about five years old. The present Sir Charles was just of age when his father died, his brother Henry was at the university, intending to take orders ; their father had amply supported them, and spared no expence in their education, but very seldom saw them for obvious reasons. He was ill only three days, and on the second, when his physicians pronounced his case desperate, she sent off an express to his sons, who arrived a few hours before his death ; they found him perfectly sensible and rejoiced to see them, though too much reduced to hold any conversation but in broken sentences ; taking his son Charles by the hand ; " Let my example, said he, teach you to shun vice—I seduced Mrs. Marshall from virtue,—she was good and amiable ;—I have been her bitterest enemy—

I have entailed on her and her innocent children calumny and contempt—I have made no provision—respect their distresses,—to your generosity I bequeath them—I delayed making a will,—’tis now too late.—My dear sons be virtuous and be happy—never violate innocence, but respect the virtuous in every situation—may your last hours be happier than mine!” then, lifting up his hands, he implored mercy and expired.—His sons were deeply affected; Henry found himself dependent on his brother, for their mother, though of a good family, had a very trifling fortune, and her jointure reverted to Sir Charles. Mrs. Marshall shut herself up in an agony of sorrow, expecting her dismissal every moment, as she well knew no provision was made for her, though the late Sir Charles continually talked of making a settlement for her and her children, but delayed it ’till too late:—she sent Sir Charles the keys of every thing and waited his commands with trembling anxiety:—after a few hours indulgence of his grief, he wrote a note

to Mrs. Marshall, requesting, as a favor, that she would resume the management of the house; he ordered elegant mourning for herself and her children, and told her, that if she chose to have any particular sitting room in the house for her own use, he would not intrude into it, but with her leave:—then, going to his brother's apartment: “My dear Henry, said he, how great are my obligations to my honored father for giving me an opportunity of proving my fraternal regard—we are joint heirs, my dear brother, and one half of my father's fortune is your's.”

Henry beheld him with astonishment; for some moments he grasped his hand unable to speak; but, when he had the power of utterance, a friendly contention took place; how unlike the generality of mercenary brothers! Sir Charles was, however, obliged to agree to a compromise; his estate was five thousand a year, besides a great deal of ready money; Henry determined to get into orders, all he would accept was twenty thousand

land pounds; "'Tis a noble fortune, and much more than ever I shall want, said he, particularly as the living in your gift is eight hundred a year, and held for me 'till I am ordained; which living, I dare say, my father thought a sufficient provision." Sir Charles, finding him determined, gave up the point; "And now, said he, 'tis necessary to consult about what can be done with Mrs. Marshall and her children; I wish to make her easy at once, for 'tis cruel to leave an afflicted mind in doubt and despair; there is a small estate just by, of about three hundred pounds a year, I think to settle that on her and her heirs, besides giving a decent sum to the children, whose interest I shall consider as my own: her character in every point of view, but one, has been unexceptionable; and as we cannot condemn that error without reflecting on the memory of a man, whose character it becomes us to hold sacred, with us she ought to stand wholly excused.—Poor woman! I pity, from my soul, her present situation: and therefore

shall hasten to make her easy if you approve my designs in her favor." Henry warmly applauded his brother's generosity, and Sir Charles instantly wrote to her and mentioned his intentions in her behalf, adding, "He would give her children five thousand pounds each, and always look on them as his nearest relations; that designing to go abroad for two or three years, he should request the favor of her continuance in that house during his absence, to superintend every thing exactly as she had been accustomed to do in his father's life time."

Mrs. Marshall was overpowered by such unexpected goodness, and we may suppose her feelings when she saw Sir Charles, must have produced a very pathetic scene: he fulfilled all his designs, saw every one made happy by his generosity, and then went abroad. Sir James's joy at his return—you were a witness to, but his kind visit to us was productive of an event on which his future happiness depends. And now, my dear Miss Maybank,

Maybank, before I proceed, tell me your opinion of Sir Charles from what you have seen and from what I have related?"—Louisa was extremely confused, her heart bore testimony to the virtues of a character so excellent, and she felt deeply interested in every thing related of him, but the acquaintance, so recent, would by no means warrant a free explanation of her sentiments; she, therefore, with some hesitation, replied, "I certainly think, Sir Charles Frankly very agreeable as to his appearance, and the little history you have related gives me a very high idea of the goodness of his heart; but as no character is absolutely perfect, and we know not what may be the shades in his, 'tis impossible to form a decisive opinion of his merits on a very short acquaintance." "From your good sense and discretion, my dear Miss Maybank, I might have expected such an answer to my question; and you, I am sure, will forgive my partiality to the opinion of Sir James, whose warm commendations of his friend have interested me much in his favor;

favor ; and now for the motives which have induced me to mention this subject. The evening Sir Charles saw you at our house, he confessed himself excessively struck with your person ; I must tell you his very words ; “ I think Miss Maybank the most interesting young woman I ever beheld, hundreds, perhaps, are more beautiful, though she is truly lovely in her face and figure ; but ’tis the expression of her countenance, the sweetness, the elegance of her manners ; so modest, easy, and unaffected, and—” “ Hold, hold, my dear madam ! cried Miss Maybank, if I could bear to hear, or hearing, believe I deserved all those fine encomiums you are lavishing on me, I should forfeit every pretension to modesty ;—so pray spare me.” “ Well, replied Lady Godfrey, smiling, I will not wound your delicacy, though, at second hand ; but only tell you, your merits, such as they are, have entirely subdued the heart of Sir Charles Frankly, but as we could not inform him whether or no your affections are disengaged, he entreated me to make the enquiry

enquiry previous to his visiting here with Sir James and myself: "If, said he, I am so unfortunate as to be too late in my application to Miss Maybank, I must see her no more; I shall then go into the country for a time at least, and attend to the improvement of my estates, in order to amuse my mind; if on the contrary no man has yet succeeded in making himself acceptable, I may hope to be admitted as a candidate for her favor, and to be accepted or rejected, as on a further acquaintance I shall appear to deserve, and now my amiable friend what do you say to my commission?" "I am extremely obliged to your ladyship for your good opinion, which has induced you to enter into this subject: I have never yet received the addresses of any man, and permit me to say, I never will, without the approbation of my friends; yet, I should think very meanly of that gentleman's delicacy, who could apply to them without having, from a long acquaintance with me, impressed me with such a favorable idea of his morals, generosity

nerosity and goodness of heart, as might entitle him to think he possessed my esteem. A premature declaration of love which can be founded on personal merits only, is in my opinion an insult on the understanding of any woman, and no recommendation to the hasty declarer. As a friend of Sir James Godfrey's I shall be happy to see Sir Charles at any time with your ladyship; in any other light I must beg to be excused receiving him until I am better acquainted with *his merits*, and he is justified in his present too favorable opinion of *mine*." "I *am* at least justified, (said Lady Godfrey, in my opinion of your good sense and delicacy, nor will Sir Charles, I am sure, give you reason to doubt his respect and discretion; that you were free, was all he wished to learn, and to be admitted as a common visitor is all he has a right to expect at present; and to prevent your feeling any embarrassment when you see him, I must declare to you, I have exceeded my commission; he requested me not to mention his particular admiration, but

but simply to obtain information if any gentleman had been accepted: but you see my imprudence; I could not keep my secret, and to own the truth, wished to impress you with a favorable idea of him; so, have the goodness to pardon me, and think the more highly of his discretion at my expence."

"You can never err but with a good design, answered Miss Maybank, and I thank you for your candour, which has, I confess, relieved me from the difficulty you apprehended." The ladies then proceeded to Hyde-Park, and having enjoyed a very pleasant airing, Miss Maybank returned just in time to dress for dinner.

After dinner, when the servants were withdrawn; Lady Beaumont acquainted her niece that Lady Summers and Mrs. Minors were set off for Castle-Hill in Berkshire, and then repeated the purport of my lord's visit — Miss Maybank was astonished; "Lord Summers address me! said she in a tone of surprise, surely he must be out of his senses!

"Why

“Why doubtless, answered Lady Beaumont, there is some difference in your ages; but Lord Summers is not an old nor a disagreeable man.” “Certainly not, madam, said her niece, and it was far from my intention to draw any comparisons respecting his age, or person, my surprise arises from his entertaining so strong a partiality for one with whom he is so little acquainted as to know neither her disposition or understanding. ’Tis at least a compliment to your person, replied Lady Beaumont, smiling, “but you will not think it a proof of his good sense, or the judgment expected at his time of life; but pray, my dear madam, what was your answer? Lady Beaumont having repeated what past; “surely, said Miss Maybank, his lordship will not think of applying to my father: ah! madam, why did you make such a reference? I could not affront him by a refusal without assigning some reason, replied Lady Beaumont, nor indeed do I think myself authorised to refuse or accept without my brother’s concurrence; and I think you
would

would not have been pleased had I left the matter to your determination.—“ I don’t know that I should, but I shall be very unhappy if my father gives his sanction to the addresses of Lord Summers.” “ Don’t make yourself uneasy my dear, replied her ladyship, I have too good an opinion of your father to suppose he will deny you the liberty of rejecting any offer you can *reasonably* object to, and if you approve of it I will write him on the subject and tell him you wish to decline the addresses of Lord Summers. This proposal accorded with the wishes of Miss Maybank, and enabled her to resume her usual composure so as to accompany her aunt to a rout at Lady Mandeville’s in the evening, where she met her good friends the Stanley’s, Warner’s, Sir James and Lady Godfrey, Mr. and Mrs. Hargrave and Sir Charles Frankly. It being her first appearance at a public rout, she was honored with very particular attention, and among others Lord Delmot, who had been mighty assiduous about Mrs. Minors, ’till her retiring to
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the house of her grandmother threw him at a distance from her conversation, and hearing she had left Town he gave up the pursuit and was at liberty to be attracted by other objects.

Lord Delmot was one of those very fashionable men who make gallantry the chief business of their lives, and look on every man's wife or daughter as fair game for their libertine pursuits, restrained by no sentiments of honor, checked by no feelings of generosity or humanity, they scruple not to deceive and betray under the sanction of gallantry and fashion, and consider every intrigue in which they succeed as an additional feather in their cap, and a passport to the admiration of the ladies. Shame to the licentious manners of the age which can induce modest, amiable young women to admit such men of their parties! What reformation can be expected from the profligate when their vices are tolerated, and oftentimes applauded by those females of fashion
who

who ought to make a stand against them, and by a just and laudable indignation, banish them the houses of the great and compel them at *least*,

“To *assume* a virtue, if *they* have it not.”

Lord Delmot no sooner beheld Miss Maybank than he was instantly charmed, he followed her like her shadow, took every opportunity of addressing her, and could not be repulsed by the coldness of her manner, or indifference, with which his gallantries were received. Sir Charles Frankly felt the utmost inquietude, he approached her with that diffidence and respect which bespoke a real admiration, and

“Where *more* is meant, than meets the ear.”

He beheld the troublesome importunities of Lord Delmot with indignation scarcely to be repressed, and when he considered his lordship's rank, superior fortune, and his reputation as a most elegant fashionable man, he trembled for his own success, and doubted his own pretensions to her favor. Before the
company

company broke up Lord Delmot took an opportunity of advancing to Lady Beaumont and politely bowing, though I have not the honor of being known to your ladyship, I hope you will permit me to pay my respects to you and Miss Maybank, when your doors are opened to any of our common friends? your lordship does me great honor, replied Lady Beaumont, very gravely, but as my residence in Town will be very short, I must deny myself the favour you intend me this season—His lordship turned on his heel evidently discomposed, and Sir Charles who had marked his address, felt pleasure in proportion to the mortification of the other, and when, on taking leave he had the happiness of handing Miss Maybank to her carriage, he was reminded by Lady Beaumont, she expected to see him the following day with Sir James and Lady Godfrey—delighted with an invitation so consonant to his wishes he assured her of his ready attendance; and when the carriage drove off, was in such harmony of spirits as excited the raillery of his agreeable friends on
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the little circumstances which convey inexpressible delight to a real lover.

On their return to Stanhope-street, Lady Beaumont remarked on the forward behavior of Lord Delmot; I believe I rather rudely repressed his desire of visiting here, but I wished to show my dislike of him, his character is detestable, and I am astonished ladies of reputation will admit him to their houses; he certainly had very unjustifiable designs on Mrs. Minors, and I know not if we ought to regret those misfortunes which have placed her out of the power of such wretches as himself. I am rejoiced at his repulse said Miss Maybank, for I never met a man so impertinently troublesome.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

UNEXPECTED DIFFICULTIES.

A FEW days past on without any thing new or particular taking place, when, one morning Lady Beaumont was informed Lord Summers was in the drawing room, she was a little alarmed as foreseeing what must have occasioned a second visit, on entering the room, after the common compliments, his lordship proceeded to business and presenting her with a small packet, "I had the honor of receiving this letter from Lord Maybank, and hope the contents will meet your ladyship's approbation." Lady Beaumont opening her packet found one for Miss Maybank, and the contents of her own was as follows :

"My

“My Dear Sister,

“Lord Summers has done me the honor of requesting my permission to address my daughter, as his lordship’s offers are truly generous and exceeds any expectations Louisa has a right to adopt, I most readily assent to his wishes, and hope you will join with me in persuading my daughter to be grateful for his lordship’s attentions and that no unnecessary delay on her part may impede the completion of an union every way so desirable and consonant to my wishes.

I am,

My dear Sister,

Your affectionate Brother,

MAYBANK.”

Much disconcerted at the perusal of this letter, Lady Beaumont sat with her eyes fixed on it much longer than was necessary to read it twice over, till his lordship, growing a little impatient—may I flatter myself with your ladyship’s interest, now I have obtained

the consent of Lord Maybank? demanded he in a very earnest manner.—My lord, replied Lady Beaumont, we are certainly much honored in the alliance you propose, but you must pardon me, if the most certain conviction of the miseries which attend a marriage without a previous knowledge of the morals and dispositions of both gentleman and lady, causes me to hesitate in the approbation you require. My niece appears to me truly amiable, but she has had no difficulties to encounter, no disappointments to contend with, therefore her character can hardly be decided on. As to your lordship's character that I am entirely unacquainted with, but by public report;—and *that*, madam, said he, interrupting her, I may venture to say, is in my favor. I hope and believe so, replied her ladyship, but if you are both equally good and respectable, there ought to be a reciprocal esteem before a marriage is absolutely determined on. Well, madam, answered his lordship, and that is what I am desirous to cultivate, and now that I have
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my passport in my hand, I may presume to hope I shall not be denied the liberty of visiting Miss Maybank? certainly not, my lord, said she, and if my niece should happily approve your lordship's addresses, I do assure you, not the smallest objection will be made on my part, for I have a great esteem for Lady Summers, and am very sensible of the honor you design my family.

This polite speech smoothed his lordship's brow, and, after requesting permission to take tea with them in the evening, he departed tolerably well satisfied for a spirit so haughty as his. 'Tis certain to an unprejudiced mind there could not appear any reasonable objection to Lord Summers—his person was really very pleasing, and he might have passed for two or three and thirty; his estate was immense, his morals in the general sense of the word among the polite world, was unexceptionable. But he was violent, haughty and fastidious to a degree, could

bear no opposition to his will, and never gave up a point he was determined to carry, yet, as these traits of his character were not generally known, many ladies had spread their nets for Lord Summers, many mothers had courted his alliance, and many had been deeply mortified in their ill success to partake of his lordship's great fortune, and command his beautiful equipage; no wonder, therefore, that he expected an overture from him should be gladly received, and that he was displeased with Lady Beaumont's coldness; but having been highly gratified by Lord Maybank's letter, and tolerably reconciled by the last speech of Lady Beaumont, he entertained no doubt of his success with the young lady.

In the mean time Miss Maybank had suffered the most painful suspense during his visit, and the moment his chariot drove off, flew down to her aunt, who had plainly the traces of vexation on her countenance, and was
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once more perusing her brother's short, though peremptory epistle—what news, my dear madam? cried she, with evident anxiety—here is a letter for you, my dear, replied her ladyship, and one I have likewise received from your father; she gave her both the letters, and watched her countenance, whilst she read them—Miss Maybank turned pale at the first lines, and before she had finished, burst into tears. Good Heavens! said she, how can my father so peremptorily command me to receive Lord Summers as a husband without knowing his character and disposition, no, I cannot obey him, I cannot accept the hand of Lord Summers! Consider what you say, my dear girl, said her ladyship, very mildly; you are ready to blame your father for so hastily *approving*, are not you equally wrong in being so ready to *disapprove*—you know as little of his lordship as your father does, and therefore ought not to be prejudiced in his disfavor; justice obliges me to say, that the public voice is in

the favor of Lord Summers who is generally esteemed—do not be hasty in your resolves, obey your father, receive his visits, and with an unbiassed mind judge for yourself.—You are very good, my dear madam, to reprove me so gently, for I acknowledge I was wrong in deciding so peremptorily, and I should be much more so if I had any reserves to you—she then briefly related the conversation which had passed some days before between Lady Godfrey and herself, and concluded, with a candid confession, that hitherto Sir Charles Frankly stood higher in her esteem than any other gentleman, but as he had never yet particularly addressed her, she certainly was entirely at liberty to reject or entertain any gentleman, and she hoped her heart was equally free—I hope so too, replied Lady Beaumont, because I know my brother's disposition, and fear he will not be persuaded to relinquish an offer so much for your advantage in point of fortune, and which really appears unexceptionable, unless the
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balance of a few years should be deemed so. I should despise myself, madam, replied Miss Maybank, if that were to be my only objection, for really Lord Summers is a very agreeable man, and you shall find, my dear aunt, that I will not be governed by capricious motives, nor like a romantic girl, fancy I must be dying for love before I marry; I will receive both gentlemen as common visitors, and it shall depend on themselves to obtain a preference which never shall be lightly given. My dear good girl, said Lady Beaumont, embracing her, may Heaven direct your choice, and may you be as happy as you deserve; for my own part, I must be neuter, and I dare confide in your principles, that you will determine as honor, your own inclinations, and reverence to your father's will, can be reconciled together.

Miss Maybank, after dinner, retiring to her own apartment, once more perused her letter, and was much hurt to observe nothing
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was left to her choice, she was commanded to receive Lord Summers as her designed husband, and considering her father was a stranger to both his person and principles, though *she* could object to neither, she could not help feeling the command was a harsh one, and dictated more from pride and consideration of fortune, than a regard to her happiness; nevertheless, so highly she thought of filial obedience, that she determined, if nothing very objectionable appeared in Lord Summers, she would sacrifice a growing inclination to the duty she owed her father.

In the evening Lord Summers was announced, dressed in the most elegant style, Mr. and Mrs. Warner were the only company present, having paid his general compliments, he advanced to Miss Maybank; I flatter myself, madam, you will pardon this liberty which Lord Maybank has the goodness to indulge me with—every friend of my father's, my lord, has a claim to my respect.

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He bowed, but felt the coldness of the word *respect*, which rather threw him at a distance, and recalled that difference in years which he was desirous should be forgotten. He was, however, sensible and intelligent, talked agreeably on several subjects, and Miss Maybank could not refuse to acknowledge, Lord Summers had a right to challenge esteem, and to be received with pleasure, and as he made no particular address to her, nor seemed to avail himself of her father's partiality, it gave her the better opinion, both of his love and respect. Her fate, she thought, must depend on the success of her aunt's letter, if her father left her the liberty of rejecting, she certainly would put an end to the pretensions of Lord Summers; if on the contrary he persisted in his commands, she was resolved, if possible, to obey him, if nothing in his lordship's conduct or temper compelled her to the contrary. Her predilection in favor of Sir Charles Frankly, she hoped was temporary, and such as could be subdued;

subdued; she owned he was to be preferred to any gentleman she had yet seen, and if left to her choice she would not hesitate to give him that preference; but it was her fixed determination to be governed by prudence and discretion, and not suffer fancy to take the lead of filial duty and obedience, how little claim so ever her father had to expect it. Having thus reasoned herself into a composure she scarcely hoped for in the morning, she retired to rest with the happy consciousness which evermore attends the performance of our duties.

END OF VOL. II.



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